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New Statesman

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MACHO MAN

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New Statesman

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New Statesman

Honecker sends his regrets

WILLY BRANDT was the West German Chancellor who first made the normalisation of relations with East Germany a major policy target. The symbolic representation of the limited success of his *Ostpolitik* was his official visit as Chancellor to East Germany in 1970.

The 14 years since this have seen relations between Washington and Moscow grow steadily (and in the last four years rapidly) worse. Their respective clients in West and East Germany have accordingly not had any encouragement from their sponsors to be adventurous in exploring pragmatic ways of extending the relationship between the capitalist and the Communist Germanies.

It is all the more striking, therefore, that the next push for German detente should have come not from another socialist Chancellor in Bonn, but from Helmut Kohl — who by common consent came to office without much in the way of ideas about foreign policy, but with unusually strong pro-American, pro-NATO, pro-cruise and Pershing and anti-Marxist prejudices. Once in office, even the arch-conservative Kohl found himself forced to respond to the new mood about relations between the two Germanies that has come to the surface in the last five years on both sides.

It is a new mood that is almost as disturbing to Washington as it is to Moscow. To Moscow the idea of a reunited Germany is much more than just a threat of a serious erosion of the Warsaw Pact or Comecon. After all, the Kremlin managed to live with the defection of Yugoslavia under Marshall Tito and manages to survive now when Romania rebelliously sends athletes to the Los Angeles Olympics and refuses to behave as a fully paid up member of the Warsaw Pact.

It has quite simply been an article of faith under any regime in the Kremlin that the permanent division of Germany was an essential Soviet interest. The people of the Soviet Union suffered at the hands of the Germans many times over what the whole of the rest of the world put together suffered. Coming on top of a national neurosis about vulnerability to invasion from the west that goes back beyond Napoleon, no Russian government is going to deviate from that prejudice.

The Kremlin is not unique in thinking that the unification of the two Germanies would be an undesirable destabalisation of the situation in Central Europe, fraught with unpredictable consequences. There has still not been a formal peace treaty to end World War II in Europe (and there is not one in prospect), but the *de facto* division of Europe into the Russian and American spheres of influence has as a matter of fact been followed by the longest period of non-war in European history. The mistake in the analysis of Moscow and Washington (and their Thatcher-Heseltine camp followers) is that the one *caused* the other.

Moscow, though, has a completely paranoid attitude towards the German question. For the Kremlin any improvement in the relations between the two Germanies is the thin end of a wedge that will lead sooner rather than later to the dreaded goal of reunification. The extraordinary pressure placed on the East German leader Erich Honecker to cancel his official visit to West Germany is only one further piece of clear evidence of this paranoia — particularly evident in a Politburo dominated by septuagenarians, with foreign policy effectively in the hands of

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Foreign Minister Gromyko and Defence Minister Ustinov, whose attitude to Europe, Germany and the United States was cast in 1945 and has not changed since.

Chancellor Kohl has himself been pretty hamfisted in the way in which he has handled the crisis. His agreement to attend a meeting of West German refugees from the East, with their expressed ideas of the eventual reunification of Germany, could hardly have come at a moment more calculated to make Honecker's negotiations with Moscow difficult. The way in which prominent members of Kohl's Christian Democratic Party were crowing about the forthcoming visit were equally of a most untactful and untactical nature.

But there can be no question about the central point. Honecker wanted to go to West Germany. It was part of his steady programme of establishing East Germany as a member of the Warsaw Pact with increasing independence. It was of a part with his decision to attend the 40th anniversary celebration of the Communist Party in Romania, the only Warsaw Pact leader to be present. It is clear that only the most extreme political and economic pressure from Moscow caused him to turn down for the second time an invitation that he has been contemplating since 1981.

THE REALITY is that in any foreseeable future the two Germanies will never be reunited in the kind of way that features in Russian and American nightmares. The social and political systems that have been developed over the past four decades have taken firm root on both sides — and are incompatible. The *Ostpolitik* that has run from Brandt to Kohl and Honecker is much more subtle than the futile suggestion of reunification as a desirable goal.

It takes as its starting point that there is a total common cultural, linguistic, family and historical heritage shared by the two countries. In normal circumstances the citizens of two such states would expect relations to be close — closer, say, than with another neighbour who shared none of these commonalities.

It is a sign of the growing confidence in East Germany over the last decade that Honecker pushed as far as he did in incurring Russian hostility to his closer relations with Bonn. In the years since the building of the Berlin Wall, East Germany has become a country that has its own increasingly 'national' confidence, with which its citizens can identify.

It must be in the interests of Europe that the process of detente between two sovereign and separate German states should continue, despite this week's Moscow-imposed setback. The process may be gradual, but over the next decade the increasing national self-confidence of the countries of eastern Europe and the increasing unease with American foreign policy attitudes in the countries of Western Europe is going to lead to a loosening of the two bloc hegemony in the region. In these circumstances the more that a sense of common interest can be created between the two Germanies, the better for the political and military stability of the whole continent. □

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New Statesman Index...

The index to Volume 106 (July-December 1983) is now available, price £1.50 (incl. p&p) from: New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, EC1R 3AU.

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Dog days

THERE WAS a time when the Liberals were mocked as the dog shit party, because their 'community politics' seemed to their rivals never to lift itself much above the level of trying to do something about nuisance by dogs. But it's clearly not a minor problem. According to a report from doctors at Manchester University, published in the latest issue of *Community Medicine*, every day in this country dogs deposit just under 1,000,000 gallons of urine and 1,000 tons of faeces — most of it on pavements and on our 'green' spaces.

Iceland takes a straightforward and sensible line on this key issue. It is illegal to keep a dog in a town and anyone caught doing so — Cabinet ministers included — is fined at once. A weaker alternative would be actually to enforce all those empty local authority by-laws against those who allow their dogs to 'foul the footpath'. But for this to be effective there would have to be a substantial body of officially employed dog-catchers, paid for by substantial local dog licences. (They would be much more useful than traffic wardens and perhaps in their spare time they could also enforce those other equally disregarded laws and by-laws about excessive exhaust emissions and dropping litter.)

The trouble is that dog lovers and owners are such a formidable British pressure group that politicians are terrified to stand up to them. As well as implied threats, they deploy all those heart-rending stories about dogs providing essential companionship to children, the lonely, the old and the infirm. Those who get bitten by dogs, or whose lives are made a misery by neurotic night-time barking, seem unable to organise a comparably effective lobby.

Perhaps this is one for Ken Livingstone. He could add to his reputation as the politician who boldly goes where others fear to tread. While the government dithers over the future of dog licences, London should show the way by introducing at once a job creating, greatly expanded dog catching service. If its not too late, he should include it in his by-election manifesto. □

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NOW THE NCCL FACES 'CAPPING'

FINAL SAY over some 20 per cent of the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL) disposable income could rest next April with officials of the Department of the Environment, under Patrick Jenkin. This when the NCCL faces a soaring workload, much of it in response to Conservative measures. ANDREW LUMSDEN reports

THE DISCREDITABLE opportunity arises from the 'paving' legislation (Local Government Interim Provisions Bill 1984) which gives Patrick Jenkin license to intervene in Greater London Council spending prior to scheduled abolition in 1986.

NCCL is presently in receipt of GLC grants totalling £83,041 pinned to the work of its police and women's committees (*see table*). This represents equal to 23 per cent of the NCCL's projected calendar 1984 income of £360,000, up from £240,000 in 1983.

The money is payable over the GLC's own accounting period of 1984-85, which ends 31 March 1985. In the normal (pre abolition fight) course of events it can be expected that next January-February the NCCL would have applied for more of this vital funding, and that the GLC would have supplied it.

But nearly all the GLC's 1984-85 grants to the NCCL, other than a recurring item in the women's committee accounts, are Section 137 funds *'deemed to be of benefit to Londoners'*. And from next April, affecting the last full financial year of the GLC's proposed existence, the Department of the Environment (DoE) is to have power to do as it likes with Section 137 grants.

Hence the disreputable situation opening up for 1985. If the NCCL applies again to the GLC, it knows that a member of the Administration which has given us the Police Bill, Patrick Jenkin, will eventually be able to direct that GLC money be withheld from the NCCL — or what is ethically almost worse, *approve* it. A distasteful 'no win' prospect.

GLC Grants to NCCL 1984–85

(Covering GLC financial year, ends 31 March 1985)

Project	*In aid of*	*Sum*
Police committee	Running costs	£10,981
Police committee	Salary of a project officer looking into complaints by London gay community	£6,585
Police committee	Research into application of the Prevention of Terrorism Act in London*	£16,676
Women's committee	Topping up grant for women's rights unit	£6,900
Women's committee	Salaries, running costs, & conference expenses for women's rights unit	£41,899
TOTAL		£83,041

* The GLC has committed a further £13,663 for the 1985-86 year

Source: GLC

Home Office thingy

THE LEVEL of awareness of Jenkin's own officials in these matters is such that the DoE press office tried to assure the *New Statesman* that the NCCL is funded by the Home Office. In fact the bulk of its income comes from its rising membership, and from sales of publications, legacies, and fees for legal help.

The GLC aid hasn't been relied on as a substitute for self-help. In this 50th anniversary year since the launch of NCCL (22 February 1934) a major effort is being made to up its self-generated revenue, with 3,000 new members recruited since January, taking the total to about 10,000, and 20,000 targeted.

The normal pattern for the NCCL is to carry forward losses year-on-year — the budgeted loss for 1984 is £30,000. But such is the weight of perceived assault on civil liberties in the UK that NCCL is also seeking to raise specially earmarked funds outside ordinary revenue for eg its enquiry into policing of the miners' strike.

Rays of hope: DoE officials ought, under the legislation, to let through grants proposed for 'worthwhile groups' (unhappily there's no definition of what these might be). And it might be feasible under the GLC constitution to shift grants to NCCL out of the Section 137 category into one not yet snared by Jenkin. ●

Membership of NCCL costs £10 (concessions available) from 21 Tabard St, London SE1 4LA.

Acid rain — it's real, Commons rules

ACID RAIN is now official, according to a report from the all-party House of Commons Environment Committee out this week. It's the most outspoken UK document on the issue to date — and would have been more so if the language about the CEGB (Central Electricity Generating Board) hadn't been toned down between draft and final text. It's still pretty abusive.

The Committee of seven Conservative MPs, three Labour MPs, and one Liberal MP, has been considering acid rain for the last four months, and has travelled to West Germany, Norway, and Sweden. The injection of European scientific opinion has resulted in an exceptionally robust anger at what members perceive to be the 'complacency' of several British organisations, including:

- the CEGB ('trite and evasive')
- the Ministry of Agriculture (evidence 'complacent and founded upon little other than conjecture')
- British motor manufacturers (members were 'appalled ... at the standard of evidence received from motor car companies. They showed an almost total lack of awareness')
- the CBI ('we are disturbed that the CBI's response to a serious debate on acid rain ... is to have done no work of any sophistication on costs to industry')

Drastic action to reduce the UK's contribution to continental European and in particular Scandinavian air pollution is recommended. British buildings and lakes are identified as being at risk. Indeed, the Committee notes that there's no available research into the effects of airborne sulphur dioxide on historical monuments in this country.

So it organised its own survey. Damage is reported to Westminster Abbey, Brompton Oratory, the Minsters at York and Beverley, Lincoln, Liverpool, and St Paul's cathedrals, and the Palace of Westminster itself. Rarely does a Committee deliberate on why the roof is falling in over its own head ...

'It is beyond doubt' the MPs assert, 'that acid rain, mainly SO_2 emissions, is damaging British buildings and slowly but surely dissolving away our cultural heritage'. The architect to Beverley Minster is quoted as stating that 'many of our most valuable stone buildings are now suffering from accelerating decay of their most characteristic features. In many cases, exquisite and often irreplaceable medieval craftsmanship, which has endured for centuries, is literally disintegrating before our eyes'.

The UK is indicted as the worst polluter of other countries in Western Europe. The Committee confirms the reported extent of damage to lakes in Scandinavia and of forest destruction in central Europe.

It insists that the only way to safeguard the environment from acid rain both here and abroad will be to reduce the nation's emissions of sulphur dioxide by 30 per cent, and of nitrogen oxides by a substantial amount. These conclusions will be a severe embarrassment to the government, the Department of Environment — and the CEGB.

Steve Elsworth

Steve Elsworth's book Acid Rain *was published by Pluto Press on 6 September.*

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RUSSELL PRESS'S £10,000 LIBEL BILL

ONE OF the country's leading providers of 'alternative' printing services, The Russell Press, may have to lay off workers and curtail operations in the latest repercussion of July's 'asbestos libel case' (*NS* 13 July). The savage farce of this case is that the plaintiff, Dr Robert Murray, said he didn't want 'substantial damages'.

Nor did he get them, when on 9 July a jury in the High Court found that he had been libelled in *Asbestos — Killer Dust*, published by the British Society for Social Responsibility in Science (BSSRS) and written by Alan Dalton. He got £500. But he also got costs, estimated at some £30,000 for a two-week case.

As a result, BSSRS Publications Ltd ceased trading on 26 July. *Hazard Bulletin*, the bimonthly aimed at trades union health and safety representatives, also ceased to appear — though efforts are being made to relaunch it.

Murray's original writs, however, had also included the book's printers, The Russell Press, and they face a bill of £10,000 as a result of this action.

Tony Benn, Eric Heffer, and Ron Todd (leader-elect of the TGWU) are launching an appeal. The fact that a writ can be issued against a printer of a publication alleged to be libellous is, as they say, 'a bit like being able to sue the electricity board for supplying power to a TV station on which a slander is uttered'.

The Russell Press has some 25 workers and regularly turns out *Peace News*, *Counter Information Services* reports, National Council for Civil Liberties handbooks, and literature for Friends of the Earth. It also prints Spokesman Books — recent titles include *Kissinger's Kingdom?*, the report on US policy in Central America by Stuart Holland and Donald Anderson, and *The Sizewell Syndrome*, Tony Benn's evidence to the Sizewell enquiry.

The present threat to the resources of the press, which is associated with

the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation and based in Nottingham, is seen as raising important questions about freedom of information, as well as demonstrating the 'four eyes for a chipped tooth' workings typical of British libel law court costs, regardless of the scale of damages assessed by the jury. Unlike authors and publishers, printers don't exercise editorial control, it's being suggested. So how come they can be sued for libel?

Joan Smith

Dr Alan Murray, an independent consultant on occupational health, successfully claimed that Asbestos-Killer Dust *represented him as having been in the pay of the asbestos industry. The jury rejected the defense offered by author Alan Dalton that he only intended to suggest that Murray, a former factory inspector, had consistently underestimated the effects of asbestos. Donations to help The Russell Press can be sent to Ken Fleet, Bertrand Russell House, Gamble St, Nottingham NG7 4ET.*

Re-Chem defied by workers

TORN between fear for their jobs and fears for their health (see NS *3 August 1984) workers at the Re-Chem toxic waste disposal plant at Bonnybridge, Scotland, have decided that on one point enough's enough.*

They've voted to 'black' any further incineration of PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls). Union officials this week told senior management that the ban won't be lifted until smoke from the incinerators has been monitored and declared safe.

Re-Chem International, the owners, are anxious to expand PCB business and are warning that the vote by the 40-strong workforce threatens the future of the plant — but are considering the practicalities of monitoring, and have agreed to more extensive medical tests for employees.

Local TGWU official John Elliott says the workers are 'scared stiff' about the health hazard of PCBs. They want 'satisfaction in their own minds' that they haven't and won't suffer from handling 'this stuff'.

Rob Edwards

MISCELLANY

Short and long view

It's Farnborough week, and the sensational success of the aviation world is the BAe 146, a British short-haul jet, which is even being bought by the Americans. The Conservative government has been quick to claim credit for providing development money for the aeroplane. In June 1978, though, Norman Tebbit was saying: 'I hope we shall not have to play the silly game of pumping money into marginal Labour seats as an act of politics rather than taking a rational decision on economic grounds.' This was just before Labour industry minister Gerald Kaufman announced £100 million for the project, after years of hard campaigning by the then Labour MP for Hatfield, Helene Hayman. The Tories, led by Tebbit, fought the project all along the way. Who's playing silly games now?

Stories About Sieges

The most amazing thing about the new Daily Maxwell *is his adoption of the motto of the SAS, 'Who Dares Wins', as the name of his million-pound bingo. The finest hour of the SAS was of course the Iranian embassy siege in 1980, which involved lots of soldiers dressed up in balaclava helmets, scaling the walls and shooting a number of terrorists who had surrendered. Since then, the most popular lecture with the officer cadets at Sandhurst has been the blow-by-blow account of the siege by an SAS person 'who was there'. The lecture ends with the SAS person asking 'Are there any questions?' A forest of eager hands go up, but at the same time a helicopter appears, hovering outside the lecture room, and the speaker is whisked off by masked men.*

Sinking Ship

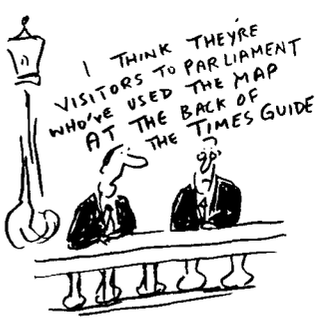
In the light of our exposure last week of John Stanley as the defence minister most enthusiastically involved in the *Belgrano* cover-up, the news that his private secretary, Philip Francis, is leaving the civil service may come as no surprise. No one will say why Mr Francis is leaving, but we have been unable to find anyone who has a good word to say for Stanley, a former Thatcher Parliamentary Private Secretary. 'Secretive and obsessive', 'Mrs Thatcher's "minder" for Michael Heseltine' (whom he followed from the Environment Department), 'paranoid about hostile media coverage' . . .

Out of joint (Pt IV)

'After every election *The Times* publishes the definitive guide to the election and to the new Parliament' — thus reads the blurb. Then after every *Times* guide the *New Statesman* publishes a list of errors (Miscellany, 26 August 1983). Then *The Times* publishes a long erratum sheet listing most of our errors and several others it has found. Now Liberal psephologist Michael Steed has launched round four of the game, listing a further long series of mistakes in this 'definitive' guide. The SDP candidate for Guildford (Margaret Sharp) is listed as a Liberal, and the Liberal candidate for Walsall South (Bernard Silver) is listed as SDP. A fair swap, perhaps, but such even-handedness doesn't apply in the three constituencies where the Liberals and SDP *both* stood. In Hammersmith, Liverpool Broadgreen and Hackney South the *Guide* relegates the Liberal in each case to unperson status by omitting their biographies, and by leaving their 12,657 votes out of the joint Alliance totals. Meanwhile in Scargill territory one of Labour's safest seats, Wentworth, is mapped as a Tory-held island.

Out of joint (Pt V)

The index of abbreviations in *The Times Guide to the House of Commons* is also 'hopelessly' incomplete. The 'FDP' candidate in Dartford may have been representing the Freie Demokratische Partei for all it tells us, and on what ticket Mr Quilty, designated LIL, gained 704 votes in Hackney South remains a mystery. 'But even if all the weird labels were explained,' says Steed, 'surely there is an obligation to provide some information, at least about those fringe candidates who get respectable votes?' The *Guide* could have explained, for instance, that the R. Adams who got 5.5 per cent of the vote in Spelthorne was Richard Adams, author of *Watership Down*, standing on an animal rights platform against a pillar of the field sports establishment Sir Humphrey Atkins.



Off the record

Eric Hammond, Frank Chapple's successor-designate at the electricians' union EETPU, was quoted in Sunday's papers saying rude things about the miners and the TUC General Council. The BBC's World at One *thought they should record this authentic voice of British trade unionism, and phoned him up. 'Look here, love,' said Hammond, 'I'm not going to give an interview to the radio because I can't claim afterwards I was misquoted.'*

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PEACE PROTESTS ROLL CALL (6)

Total arrested to date in UK and Eire: 5466

Arrests to date by location

London **13**

22.2.84. 13 Norfolk peace protestors arrested outside Houses of Parliament after chaining themselves to railings. All 13 given conditional discharges but four spent 3-10 days in prison for refusing to give their real names (they gave names like Ghandi and Mandela).

5.7.84. A Greenham woman chained herself to a helicopter at a military exhibition at Waterloo. Given conditional discharge 24 August. **1**

6.8.84. 8 Greenham women arrested. Sally, Monika, Denise, Suzannah, Hannah, Jane, Lilli and Jane climbed up the canopy of the Whitehall London Theatre of War and remained there for four hours. They came down of their own accord whereupon 7 were arrested and another later arrested along with 6 other women for sitting on the steps of Rochester Row Police Station and charged with obstruction. All 8 were charged with obstructing the police in Whitehall and in addition 3, Sally, Denise and Hannah, were charged with criminal damage. They were held overnight and a magistrates' order for fingerprints was obtained on Tues 7 Aug. These were given reluctantly as the women did not wish to be detained longer than was necessary. Hearing 10am Bow Street on September 7. **8**

Catholic Peace Action (Ash Wednesday Action). Update: at Horseferry Road Magistrates Ray Towey jailed for 7 days on 8 June. Sarah Hipperson jailed for 7 days and given a £50 fine for breaking a conditional discharge which she did not agree to as she is a full time peace worker. Carmel Martin allowed 7 days to consider paying a £50 fine or 7 days in prison. She chose to go to prison on 19 June. Patrick decided not to pay the fine, and awaits the legal system catching up with him.

18 June. Horseferry Rd Magistrates (3 May Action). All 9 found guilty and all but one refused to be bound over to keep the peace. 8 sentenced to 7 days in prison. In addition to those arrested and imprisoned Linda Frewin and Patricia Gaffney spent 10 days in prison for non-payment of fines from 21-31 July.

The prosecutor told a CPA supporter 'I have been moved by what these people said today, but my job is to put a case against them — but you must continue to do this, only by coming through the courts can you bring attention to it and bring about change.'

Faslane Peace Protestors London MOD action 11 June 84

Update: hearing now adjourned until October. Cr. damage charges originally in excess of £2000 now raised to over £8000. A further charge has been brought against Barbara Gordon, that of 'damage to a police-man's watchstrap' at the committal to Crown Court hearing on 22 August.

Birkenhead, Cheshire **2**

6.8.84. 2 women arrested after painting 'We Remember Hiroshima' signs in 3ft high letters in four public places. Charged with cr. damage and possibly contempt.

Upper Heyford USAF Base **29**

21.6.84. 29 demonstrators arrested after dancing and painting slogans on the runway. (Details next month.)

11.8.84. 2 persons arrested after climbing 150ft tower. Stuart Morris and William Anderson, also 2 march organisers, arrested as marchers entered Oxford and charged with obstruction. **4**

Salisbury Plain, Nr North Tidworth **8**

24.7.84. 8 Southampton women arrested tracking cruise launchers. An army officer officially arrested them then handed them over to the MOD who impounded their van and handed them over to the civil police. Held in cells at Salisbury police station for 6 hours where two of the women were strip-searched. Charged with 'Contravening the Byelaws of Salisbury Plain' (Military Lands Byelaws 1981). When first arrested the soldiers seemed unsure of procedure and were observed by the women looking up a rule book. Charges were dropped after their release.

Chilwell US Ordnance Depot, Notts **7**

May 84. 7 arrested inside depot. 3 charged with cr. damage to 2 metres of fence (£106 damage per person) — hearing 27 Sept. The other four persons have been charged with '*intention* to cause cr. damage', an unusual charge. Hearing is on 25 Sept. at Shire Hall Magistrates' Court, Notts.

1.7.84. 'Reclaim Chilwell' demo. 100s of protestors arrested temporarily, 11 eventually detained and charged. Charges range from obstruction to cr. damage and br. of peace. **11**

Two divisions of police brought in to contain picketing were spotted inside the garrison by demonstrators. Apparently this US base is used regularly by police while on picket duty. The various divisions arrive on Sunday afternoons and leave on Fridays.

Please send new information to ***Janey Hulme*** *at the* New Statesman. *Arrests of peace protestors at other locations (noted in earlier Roll Calls) account for the difference between the grand total of arrests and those listed here by location.*

Protestors aim to stop new ethnic monitoring

'ETHNIC MONITORING' of claimants by Norman Tebbit's Department of Employment (DE) looks set to be back in a few months, and there's already been a demonstration against it — at Coldharbour Lane in London's Brixton last Friday.

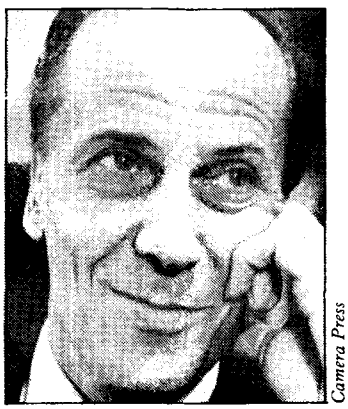
Some 25 members, mostly white, of the London Campaign Against Racist Checks (LCARC), formed in March, held a day-long protest in front of the dole office hoping to draw attention to what they describe as 'another government attempt to depict black people as "scroungers" '.

Under new DE guidelines expected to be introduced this autumn/early winter counter clerks at unemployment offices will be expected to categorise claimants as 'Africans/West Indians', 'Asians', or 'Europeans and Others'. The scheme is theoretically voluntary, allowing anyone not wishing to be racially classified to be entered as 'Refusal'.

But LCARC believe that dole queue clerks will in fact be under orders not to *tell* claimants that the scheme is voluntary. LCARC spokesperson Myk Zeitlin (members of the Campaign are themselves mostly unemployed) says that in a four-week trial run of the ethnic monitoring scheme in 14 dole offices throughout the country in 1982 counter clerks were disciplined for informing people that they didn't have to be visually assessed this way — and that the resulting refusal rate was as high as 50 per cent.

It is further feared that:

- the names of 'Blacks', 'Asians' and 'Refusals' will be added to the DHSS computer along with their national insurance numbers and date of first claim, but that this won't be done with people deemed to be 'Europeans and Others'.
- and that, though the DE maintains that the information would be purely statistical and used by groups including trades unions and the Commission for Racial Equality, in fact police, immigration, and even Fraud Squad officials will have access to it.



Camera Press

Mr Tebbit, of the UK's all-white Cabinet

Myk Zeitlin recalls an incident in Islington when a dole officer was found to have been using police files to investigate a claimant, 'and if they can get police files, it must work the other way round as well'.

'Ethnic monitoring' first began in 1963, but it came to an end two years ago when claimants were no longer required to register at Job Centres, where the assessments were made. The Civil and Public Services Association (CPSA) policy is to resist re-introduction of similar schemes. LCARC plans a series of actions in the hope of knocking revival on the head.

Michael Lewis

Mark Salmon

Happy birthday, Greenham women!

From a little seed on 5 September 1981 to today's great tree. Greenham women are calling for 10 million European women to walk out between 20-30 September in protest against this month's biggest ever NATO exercise. Pictured: *lighter moment from the Alconbury USAF base blockade of last Friday. 140 were arrested.*

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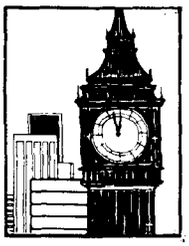

PETER KELLNER, Political Editor

When unions have nothing to lose but their fudge

IN MONDAY afternoon's debate at the Trades Union Congress at Brighton there were three honest speakers. Arthur Scargill explained why he wanted the power workers to support the miners, and Eric Hammond and John Lyons explained why they wouldn't. All the rest was bullshit.

There are several similarities between TUC and Labour Party conferences. They are dominated by many of the same people — trade union leaders flexing their block votes. They take place in the same venues, alternating between Brighton and Blackpool. They embody the same tensions between the memberships and the activists. But there is one crucial difference: the TUC deals in real power, while Labour conferences, by and large, are just pretending.

When a party conference decides on a policy — on nuclear weapons, or collective bargaining, or the Common Market — it cannot command the delivery of that policy in the real world outside. Many of the constitutional arguments inside the party have concerned that lack of accountability; but so far the position remains that the conference cannot dictate what appears in the party's manifesto, and the manifesto anyway does not necessarily determine what a Labour government does in office. Words in conference resolutions may have symbolic meaning; and nobody should underestimate the potency of symbols. But that is the limit of it.

Within the TUC, words in resolutions take on a different complexion. They do matter. Unions that happily disregard Labour Party resolutions, content in the knowledge that their defiance will go unpunished, are much more cautious about defying the TUC. To take one example from a few years ago: from 1975 to 1978 the TUC agreed the terms of each year's incomes policy with the Labour government. But in 1978 congress refused to approve a further year's pay curbs. From then on the Labour government could not expect the TUC to deliver its member unions.

The corollary of the TUC's concern with the precise wording of its resolutions leads to some unfairly criticised negotiations and deals behind closed hotel suite doors. It is not the arm-twisting that deserves criticism: that is the inevitable consequence of trading in power. What is less savoury is often the outcome of that arm-twisting. The people who emerge with least credit from the past week are those who devised a form of words for supporting the miners, knowing that the support, where it mattered, would not be forthcoming, and indeed devising words with the precise intention of facing both ways at once.

Before the deal that led to the withdrawal of a series of amendments from the NUM motion on the miners' strike, the issues were clear cut. ASLEF proposed that

> Congress calls on all unions not to cross official picket lines established by the NUM and/or other unions who are supporting the miners' struggle.

And the seamen's union proposed that

> Congress further calls on all affiliated unions not to accept or use any coal/coke or any other materials which are delivered by non-union labour or members of the armed forces.

Those proposals, had they been passed, would have obliged unions that opposed them nevertheless to obey them. But it was feared that some unions might defy the TUC; and, even if their leaderships didn't, their members would. So, to avoid the risk of outright defiance, a fudge was born. Those amendments were withdrawn in favour of a general council statement which weakened support for the miners in two ways. First, it dropped the instruction, 'Congress *calls* on all unions . . .' and substituted 'affirms total support for' not moving coal across NUM picket lines and not using oil that is substituted for coal.

Such nuances matter. If the editor of the *NS* 'calls on' me to write 5,000 words saying why Mr Scargill is is the world's greatest living human being, it would be an act of defiance for me not do so. But if he merely 'affirms total support for' such an article, he identifies where his sympathies lie should I care to write it, but he leaves me the option of devoting my energies to some other end.

THE TUC's fudging did not stop with those weasel words. The general council's statement went on to underline the voluntary nature of its policy of supporting miners:

> The practical implementation of these points will need detailed discussions with the general council and *agreement with unions who would be directly concerned.* (emphasis added)

If the general council felt it could command unions to obey its instruction, it would not 'need agreement' with the unions concerned; it could command compliance. If you 'need agreement' you concede the possibility that agreement will not be forthcoming. And, of course, the architects of the compromise knew that the electricians' union and the Engineers and Managers' Association would not agree. When the vote came, the general council's statement was passed overwhelmingly. David Basnett and Len Murray described it as a victory for unity. But it was a unity based on a deceit — as Eric Hammond said and, in his heart, Arthur Scargill knows.

If the miners' strike continues into the autumn, the magnitude of that deceit will become clear. Some of the union leaders who spoke most strongly in favour of the general council's statement — David Basnett of the general and municipal workers, Gavin Laird of the engineers, Ron Todd of the transport workers, Jimmy Knapp of the railwaymen — will find that their criticisms of the electricians and power station managers fades before their embarrassment at the determination of many of their own members to keep the power stations working.

But perhaps the appearance of unity to be followed by the reality of division is now becoming par for the course. Two years ago, at a special conference at Wembley, the congress passed a unanimous resolution opposing the government's union legislation. In the operative paragraph it said that the general council would help unions experiencing legal action by an employer, but first the council would need to be 'satisfied that assistance from the movement is justified'.

At the first puff of legal wind from an employer, Mr Eddie Shah in Warrington, that qualification exposed the TUC's divisions. The NGA asked the TUC for industrial support in line with the Wembley resolution. The Employment Policy and Organisation Committee voted to back the NGA, but after arm-twisting by Len Murray the full general council overturned the committee's decision and the NGA was, in effect, defeated. This week's congress voted to reject the council's action, but did not remove the qualification of the Wembley conference; so there is still something for everybody, and plenty of scope for future rows.

I daresay there are old TUC hands who will find nothing new in all this. But never before have the stakes been so high. Unity matters, of course, but only if it is unity behind a policy that will stick. That requires clarity in the tactics and strategy to be pursued. What the events of the past year, culminating in this week's congress, have shown is that the TUC cannot provide both unity and clarity.

Is it inevitable? Three opinion polls in last Sunday's papers suggested that there is little support by most trade union members for direct action in support of the miners. But one poll, Gallup's in the *Sunday Telegraph*, also showed widespread disenchantment with the government's policy towards the unions. A year ago there was a two-to-one majority approving the government's union laws. Now those who approve outnumber those who disapprove by only three points. And a clear majority of the public, 56 per cent, thinks that the government's union laws are harming industrial relations. Presumably Norman Willis, the TUC's new general secretary, would like to build on that public sentiment. It is a pity that this week's congress gave him so little useful guidance on how to do so. □

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DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE

As the SDP prepares to gather in Buxton for its third annual conference, Peter Riddell looks back on the record of David Owen's first year as leader and his impact on the Alliance

CURRENT BRITISH POLITICS fits more closely to a Tory than a Marxist interpretation of history — the importance of individuals and unpredictable events rather than inevitable long-term trends. After all, where would we be now if half a dozen Labour MPs had switched from Michael Foot to Denis Healey in the November 1980 Labour leadership election, and if there had been no Falklands War? And where would we, and particularly the SDP/Liberal Alliance, be now without Dr David Owen?

It is almost impossible to underestimate the doctor's contribution to the SDP in the past year. Of course, there has been a loosening of party ties which would probably have continued to help the Alliance. But if David Owen had lost at Plymouth Devonport in the 1983 general election, the SDP (and the Alliance) would probably have ceased to be a significant, complicating force in a continuing three-party electoral system.

As it is, David Owen will be able to tell the SDP faithful when they meet in Buxton this weekend, 'We have survived'. All else — the rows over joint selection of candidates, party identities and policy-making — is secondary. Indeed, as Peter Kellner pointed out (*NS* 27 July), for all Labour's success in the European elections, it has been the Alliance, not Labour, which has been the main gainer this year in the opinion polls, at the expense of the Tories. And it was the Alliance which made the largest relative gains in the local elections on 3 May.

The Alliance has, in short, kept in the game, partly reflecting Dr David Owen's ability to read the political mood, at least that of 'middle Britain'. This has been a personal as much as party effort. Within days of the 1983 election he pushed aside the battered Roy Jenkins as leader. The doctor's view was that, despite the Alliance's near 26 per cent share of the total vote, the result (17 Liberal MPs and six Social Democrats) was a failure. He decided that the party required both a high profile to ensure that it was not forgotten by the public and a policy shake-up.

Above all, David Owen believed that he would have to do it virtually on his own. The old Gang of Four approach was quickly dropped. Roy Jenkins retired to an elder statesman role, making only occasional interventions, while Shirley Williams, still the darling of the SDP activists, and Bill Rodgers virtually disappeared from sight and influence, without their Commons seats.

David Owen set off on his own familiar crusade as the macho man of British politics, constantly talking of the need for toughness and hard choices. He became every radio and television producer's favourite pundit, reacting to big events in the language of an enlightened headmaster, thoughtful but firm. In the process he turned into one of Britain's two most discussed politicians — an Oliver Cromwell to Ken Livingstone's Prince Rupert.

It took some time for this approach to work. The turning point was the Stafford by-election on 3 May. Its very ordinariness was significant. The SDP candidate was not a star, there was none of the usual media fanfare and little outside help as the party started as the underdog in face of a strong Labour challenge to regain the second place lost in 1983. Yet the result, an improved second behind the Tories, represented an important threshold. On Dr Owen's view, 'Until then we had been defying the laws of gravity. The SDP is now recovering its self-confidence.' This was confirmed six weeks later by the totally unexpected SDP victory in the Portsmouth South by-election.

YET THESE successes have masked serious tensions within the Alliance. From the start Dr Owen stressed the SDP's separate identity, ostensibly on the grounds that the newcomers who had founded a party in 1981 did not want to see it disappear so soon into a merged grouping. Instead, he talked of coalition politics involving a close association between separate Alliance partners with complementary traditions and roots. In addition, David Owen wanted to retain the veto power granted by the existence of a separate SDP against what he saw as the lack of 'discipline' among the Liberal activists.

A contrary view soon became apparent. Although a merger before the next general election was soon ruled out, Roy Jenkins and his followers (mainly former MPs) argued against any obstacles to the natural development of closer ties with the Liberals at a local level. The immediate bone of contention was joint selection — how far members of both parties should be involved in selecting candidates in seats allocated to one or another of the Alliance partners. The Liberals favoured joint selection, partly because many local activists were still smarting from having had to surrender prized seats in the 50/50 carve-up with the SDP before the 1983 election. And, with their larger membership (roughly 3-to-1 over the SDP), many Liberals also reckoned they could dominate any joint decisions.

Within the SDP, the Jenkinsites supported joint selection when local parties wanted it, but Dr Owen and his allies argued that this would be the first step towards a blurring of identities, leading to eventual merger. After some adroit manoeuvring reminiscent of old Labour Party days, Dr Owen had his way on the issue of joint selection for last June's European elections. However, he showed that in practice he is often more flexible than his rhetoric when last January he bowed to the majority view on the SDP national committee to allow joint selection in a couple of Euro-seats. This argument could revive shortly over Westminster seats, given Liberal demands for the return of 50 seats which the SDP fought last time. The prospect is for renewed aggravation, some furious local rows (notably in Leeds and parts of London), but not a general split.

Increasingly significant have been differences over policy, both the substance and the style. These date from David Owen's speech at Salford a year ago when he talked of the need for 'toughness and tenderness'. (A book based on his speeches and articles in his first year as leader of the SDP has been brought out by Penguin in time for Buxton. To its title *A future that will work* has been added a sub-title, 'Competitiveness and Compassion'.)

In particular, he argued that 'Britain, to be more prosperous, has to have a belief in the market economy, an understanding that this country has to be more competitive and recognise more openly the role of profit and reward.' There had to be 'a hard-headed, tough-minded attitude that sets a climate of risk-taking.' In a later contribution to the free-market Journal of Economic Affairs he talked of using 'the term "market" openly and unashamedly' and of busting open private and public cartels and monopolies. This was not the way Shirley Williams had ever spoken, or even thought.

These statements were popularly seen as a lurch to the right. This was an oversimplification since David Owen could fairly point to the 'tender' parts of his message, the commitment to the National Health Service and to redistributive social policies. Moreover, the terms left and right beg many questions; after all, the Thatcher administration has been much more frequently centralist, mercantilist and interventionist than it has been decentralist, free market and laissez faire. On Dr Owen's view, Thatcherism has changed the terms of the political debate and he has merely adapted.

Yet what has mattered has been the perception and that has been that Dr Owen has offered 'Thatcherism with a human face'. He has reinforced this impression by his stance on particular issues of the moment. At times he has appeared to be out-Thatchering Thatcher — in urging a tough line, for example, on the use of the trade union law and throughout the miners' dispute.

David Owen has frequently been warmly received by Conservative MPs after interventions in the Commons and, as John Biffen pointed out, tongue in cheek, he has begun to sound increasingly like a *Daily Telegraph* editorial. The final accolade came a few weeks ago from Peregrine Worsthorne, who applauded his born-again rejection of radical chic and trendiness. All this praise has reinforced the doubts of the *Guardian* reading

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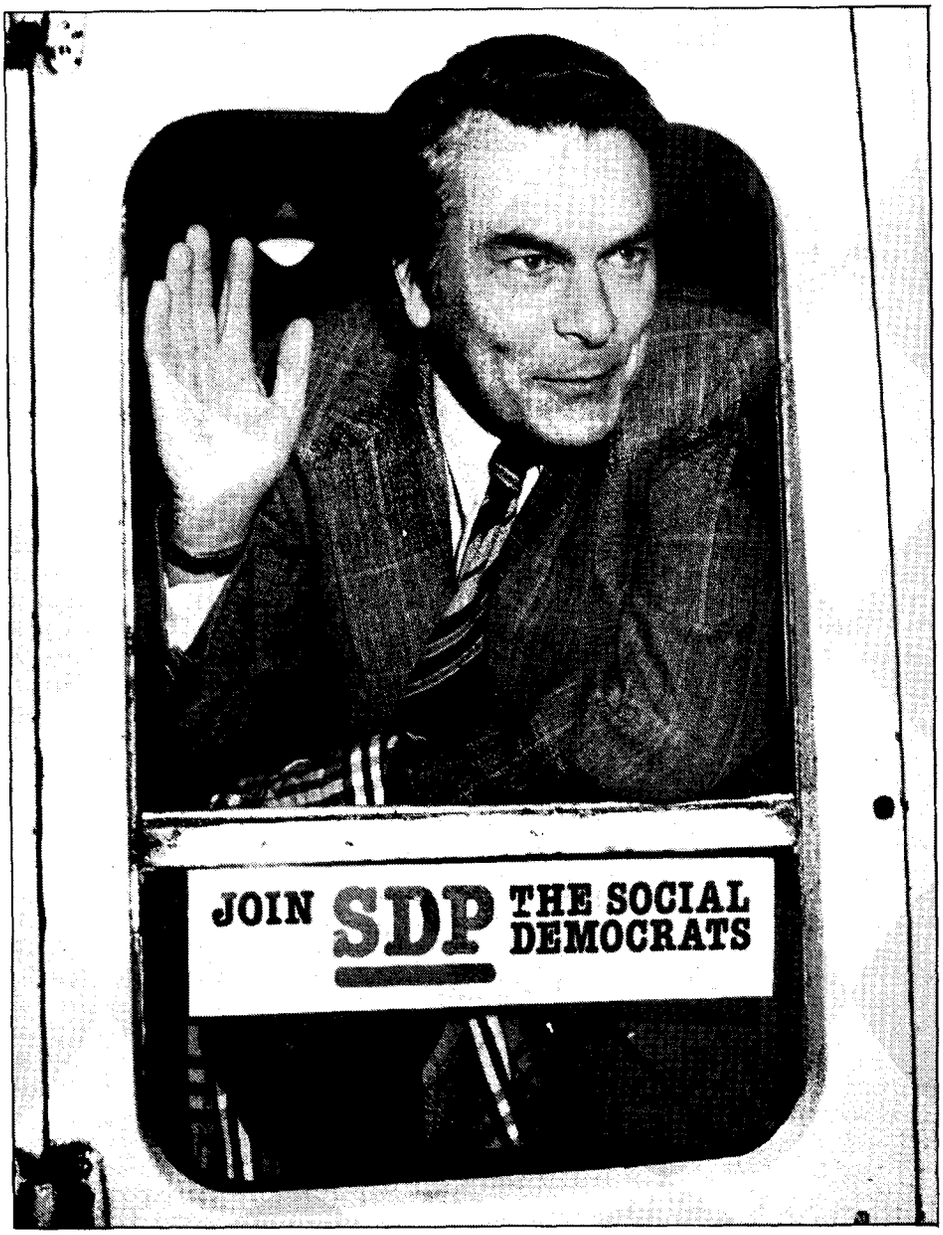

PA

Around 50,000 have accepted the invitation to join and follow the Owen 'tough and tender' message

classes who constitute most of the Alliance activists. In particular, many Liberals' views on, say, the police and nuclear weapons (a potentially divisive issue at the Liberal Assembly this month) are much nearer to those of the Labour Left than to those of Dr Owen. An additional Liberal worry is that David Steel is being continually overshadowed by the doctor's hyperactivity.

Within the SDP, Dr Owen has generally been allowed to initiate policy without much consultation. The Jenkinsites have been scattered and on the defensive, grudgingly recognising the doctor's indispensability. But there have been the odd rumblings. For instance, last January a suggested reference to conscription in an Owen speech on voluntary national service was removed after protests at the party's policy committee. And in July, Roy Jenkins warned, in obvious criticism of Dr Owen, against 'adopting a sub-Thatcherite posture', reiterating what he pointedly described as 'the original SDP view' in favour of retaining the current frontiers of the public and private sectors.

The party's activists have generally been quiet. But the agenda for Buxton includes a motion from South Yorkshire calling for a definition of the political and economic implications of the social market economy. This is being seen by the leadership as critical of Dr Owen's stand. But do not expect any rows, just pleas for understanding and compassion.

The central question is where this frequently tough, and only occasionally tender, approach will take the Alliance. According to Francis Pym, the SDP has been the only party smart enough to appreciate the opportunity of the new middle ground which Dr Owen is holding almost single-handed. Paradoxically, an appeal to disillusioned Tory voters may be just what Liberal strong-runners may need to win in seats like Chelmsford, Richmond, Cheltenham and Torbay.

YET THERE are doubts, shared by Tory wets like Sir Ian Gilmour as well as Roy Jenkins, that Dr Owen's toughness, or mini-Thatcherism, may be misreading the public mood. On their view, voters may be beginning to turn against both the Prime Minister's style and substance. The public may not want a macho crusader in 1987 or 1988, but will prefer a healer or reconciler; Dr Owen could end up stranded with last year's rhetoric.

Another line of criticism, particularly from Liberals, is that the Alliance should not concentrate solely on disillusioned Tories, but should appeal as a left-of-centre party to ex-Labour voters. However, the most striking feature of the development of the SDP in the last year is how it has ceased to aspire to be a Labour Party Mark Two. With few, mainly Liberal, exceptions, the Alliance has made little impact in the Labour strongholds of the big cities. A revealing paragraph in Shirley Williams's presidential report for Buxton records that the SDP has only 32 members of London borough or metropolitan district councils, compared with 236 in non-metropolitan districts. This is only partially reassuring for Labour, whose hopes of power rest on defeating the Alliance in 'non-met' constituencies.

All this means that the Alliance, and particularly the SDP, is not a realistic immediate challenger for power. But it can still be an important spoiler, both by winning 25 to 30 per cent of the total vote, and thus indirectly helping one or other of the major parties, and by possibly capturing 40 to 50 seats at the next election, mainly from the Tories. It could even hold the balance in a hung Parliament.

Dr Owen's analysis is that the Tories and Mrs Thatcher will become more unpopular as the economic recovery peters out and unemployment rises again. This should provide the opportunity for an Alliance surge, though possibly not until late 1985 or 1986. But it is now not inconceivable that Labour could be the beneficiary.

It is easier to list the uncertainties than the probabilities. The Alliance would undoubtedly suffer a major reverse if Dr Owen disappeared. Similarly, for all the sibling rivalry of two middle-aged men, Dr Owen is keen to bolster David Steel as Liberal leader for fear that his disappearance would open up internal rifts. It is not true that the SDP is just a one man band; its 50,000 membership may not constitute a mass party, but it probably now represents a hard core, with a base of committed activists in quite a number of key constituencies.

Nevertheless, without Dr Owen the SDP would lose its main claim to talk on anything like equal terms with the other parties. With him the Alliance has won the chance of another round at the top table. □

Peter Riddell is Political Editor of the Financial Times.

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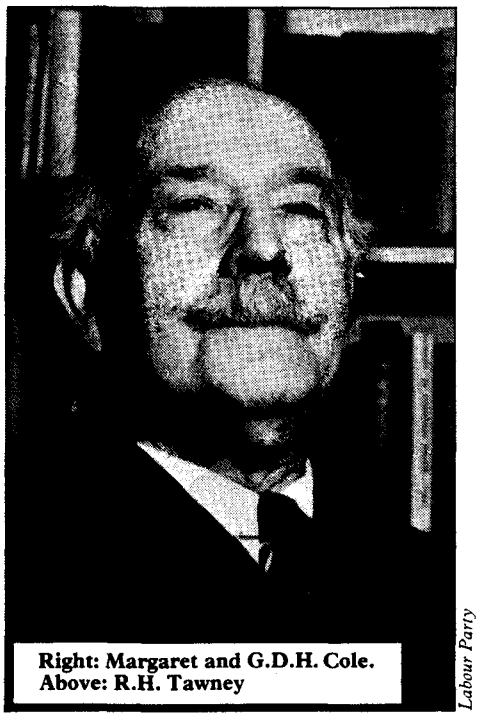
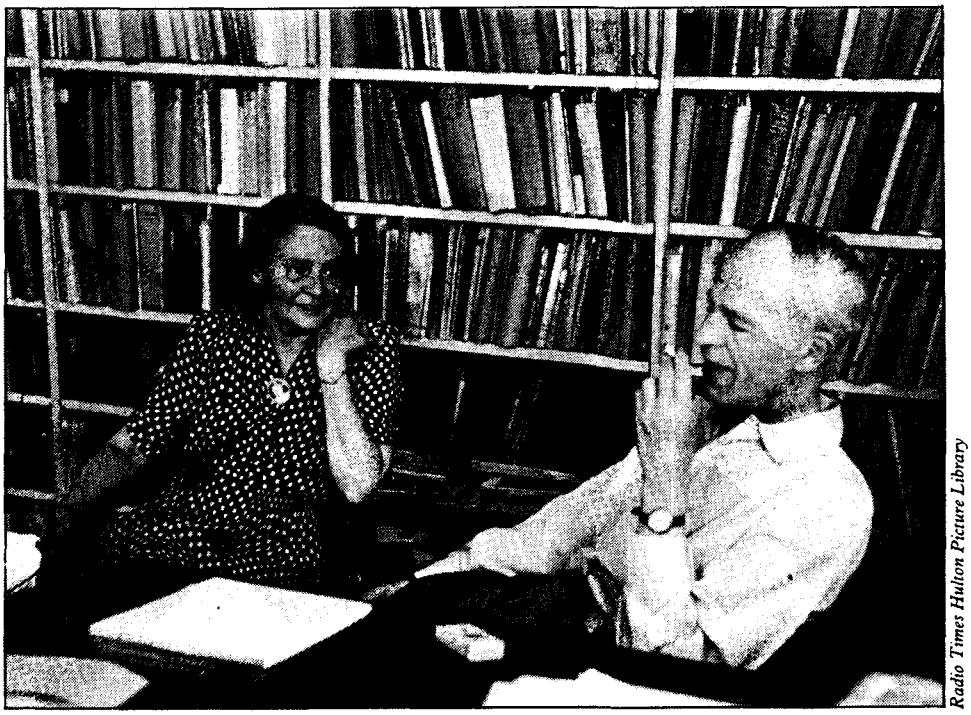


Right: Margaret and G.D.H. Cole.
Above: R.H. Tawney

Labour Party



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FOR A SENSIBLE EXTREMISM

Contempt for Britain's own radical tradition by Marxists and for theory by 'pragmatists' has undermined the political vigour of the Left. In the third of an occasional series on Fabianism and Marxism, Anthony Wright argues that R. H. Tawney must be restored to his rightful place

ONCE UPON a time, when Mrs Thatcher became leader of the Conservative Party, the right-wing columnist Peregrine Worsthorne advised her to read some Tawney. This would, he said, at least enable her to understand what her political opponents in the Labour Party were really on about. She probably ignored this advice, and as things turned out she could well afford to do so.

Who today reads Tawney? Or Cole? Or any of the other figures who influenced the thinking of a generation of British socialists? When the Social Democratic exitists from Labour tried, in a brazenly illegitimate act of appropriation, to smuggle the mantle of Tawney out with them, it was noticeable that only a few Fabian and Old Left voices were raised in protest and resistance. It was, it will be recalled, a time when Labour's Good Riddance brigade was in full cry. Mention a name, almost any name, and the response from these militant apostles of the Narrow Church was the same. So, if the Social Democrats thought they had some claim on Tawney, then good riddance to him.

It was Engels who once remarked that universal suffrage had the great merit of forcing socialist parties to test their support and assess their strategy. When the Narrow Church tested its support in June 1983 it came to 27.7 per cent, Labour's lowest vote since 1918. The repetition of this painful fact requires no apology, since it is the essential fact. However, it invites an explanation that extends beyond even the party's crippling internecine strife and the consequent infirmities of its manifesto. What the party had come to lack was a coherent public philosophy. This line of argument will bring us back, eventually, to Tawney.

Labour's defeat has been not merely a political defeat but a philosophical one. Thatcherism took on Labour at the level of ideas and values — and won. This was not because of the intellectual strength of the New Right, but because of Labour's philosophical vacuum.

In some ways this was a remarkable turnabout. One traditional belief about British socialists was that all their talk about equality, fair shares, fellowship and the rest at least showed that their hearts were in the right place. Socialism, the wordly wise critic alleged, might be alright in theory, but it would not work in practice. But at least woolly-minded idealists were regarded as idealists. Now consider the change that has taken place. Labour might have its pockets stuffed full of policies (as in 1983), but where were its principles? What, in a basic sense, did it now believe in?

Such questions are what a public philosophy is all about. Thatcherism had one, and Labour did not (or seemed not to, which is what matters). Thatcher hammered away at *our* question: what sort of society did people want to live in? This was a terrain that Labour seemed to have abandoned, which no mountain of NEC policy statements could fill. Only once during the 1983 election campaign (Kinnock's 'don't be old, don't be sick. . .' speech of despair) did Labour seem to find its authentic answering voice.

THE ONE thing that is clear at the end of the twentieth century is that there are different *kinds* of socialism, and that socialists need to engage in some discrimination and definition. There are also different kinds of socialist strategy. The Labour Party has traditionally been a party that has sought to advance towards the socialist commonwealth through a strategy of democratic reform, political persuasion and parliamentary action. This involves, among other things, the small matter of winning elections (which, contrary to belief in some quarters, has never been easy for the Left in Britain). However, there are alternative socialist strategies available, and in the post-1956 and post-1968 fissures of both official Communism and official Labourism there have been many advocates of such strategies.

In many ways this opening up on the Left has been invigorating. But consider the paradox. On the one hand, the explosion of socialist literature and proliferation of socialist groupuscules; on the other hand, the simultaneous reduction of the political fortunes of the mass party of the Left to their lowest level in modern history. No socialist in Britain has been able to ignore the hegemony of Labour, but there are now many varieties of 'good socialist' whose main interest in the Labour Party is to erode its hegemony on the Left. Thus Hilary Wainwright, writing from the Socialist

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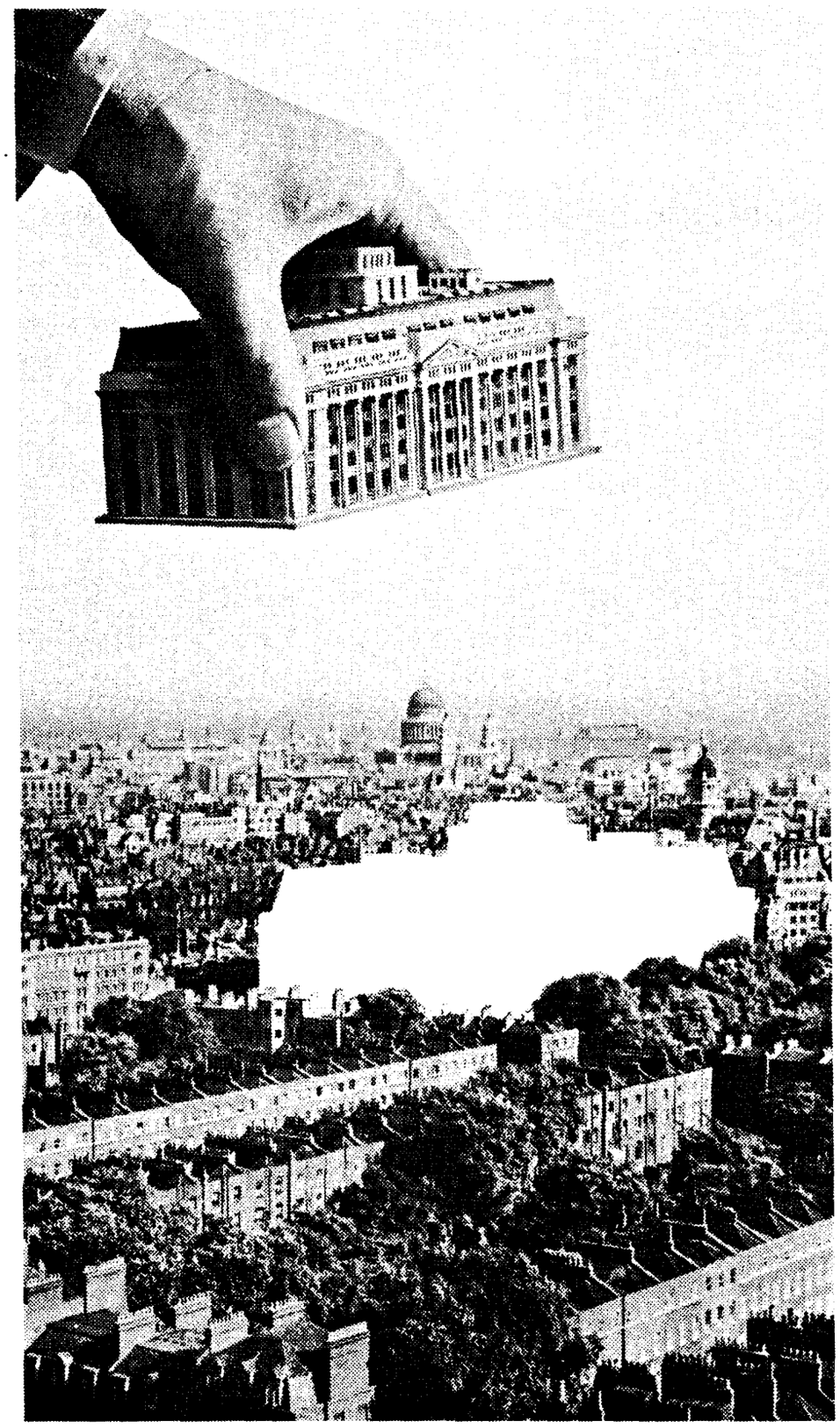

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Society, recently attacked the Kinnock leadership for its failure to endorse the Scargill version of the class struggle. Now Wainwright is undoubtedly a good socialist, but she holds no brief for the Labour Party and its parliamentary socialism, and has consistently advocated a different strategy of 'popular struggle'. Ralph Miliband, also attached to the Socialist Society, has argued in various publications that socialist advance is best served by Labour's disintegration.

To point out these differences is not to advocate a new version of the narrow church, but simply to register the fact that no party can prosper unless those who tutor it are at least committed to the success of the party itself. During Labour's long night, Shirley Williams used to argue that the fate of the party depended upon the 'legitimate Left'. This was (and is) true, for it had been the traditional Labour Left that has stalked the boundary lines of democratic socialism, often (as with Aneurin Bevan) with an aggressive confidence. So why has the contemporary 'soft' Left been so damagingly slow in coming forward, seemingly reduced to being a mere spectator at events, and only now called upon to save the party because nobody else can?

Again, the story comes back to a loss of theoretical confidence. In particular, the loss of a secure anchorage in a domestic tradition of democratic socialism, of 'British socialism'. For what has occurred over the past decade and a half is a deliberate denigration of this tradition. In historical shorthand, socialists stopped reading Tawney. In the early 1960s the tradition had seemed alive and well, nourished by a promising alliance of the Old New Left and a Fabian egalitarian redistributionism, and optimistic about the impact that a Labour government could make on the class character of British society. By the end of the 1960s, though, the tradition had ruptured and fragmented, a condition that has persisted, with catastrophic consequences.

How, and why, did this occur? Two, related, causes stand out. First, there is the influence of Wilsonian pragmatism, especially on the generation for whom 1964 was their 1945 and carried with it equivalent hopes and expectations. The point here is not to recite the familiar litany of betrayal, still less to claim that Labour became 'revisionist' in this period (for the so-called revisionists like Gaitskell and Crosland were resolutely doctrinaire), but to identify a political style that carried with it a contempt for theory of *any* kind. Remember Harold Wilson's frequent *boasts* that he never got beyond the first page of Marx's *Capital*? Or the more damning evidence provided by the vast memoir of his administration, where he never once rises above the minutiae to tell us what he thought it was all *for*.

Wilson provides the central example here, but the point goes wider. It turns on the character of a Labourism in which ends and means had become so disconnected that the basis for a coherent reformism was lost. The charge is not that Labour in these years failed to deliver 'socialism', but that it failed to deliver a *strategy* which evidenced any plausible connection between its immediate preoccupations and its larger ambitions.

The result was twofold. It identified 'British socialism' with the untheoretical Labourism of these years. The disillusionment with the latter cast a shadow of neglect and discredit over the former. It also created a theoretical vacuum (which socialist politics abhors). Here we come to the second source of the fragmentation of a tradition. Having been undermined by the practice of the Right, it was now to be subjected to frontal assault from the second wave New Left (of Anderson, Nairn etc.). The general context here is the revival of Marxism consequent upon the latter's escape from its long, ossifying Communist imprisonment. The particular form that this revival took in Britain was a mode of analysis that consigned the domestic socialist tradition to the theoretical and historical dustbin.

This was part of a more sweeping rejection of British cultural and intellectual traditions. Britain had failed to have a proper bourgeois revolution and failed to produce a proper intellectual class. It had therefore also failed, uniquely, to develop its own Marxism, but merely a dreary Fabian empiricism and a soggy ILP-ish moralism. The stale and suffocating air of British socialism must be exposed to the bracing breeze of continental Marxism. It was left to Edward Thompson (part of the post-1956 secession from British Communism, and who now refers to himself simply as 'a follower of certain ideas of William Morris') to resist this comprehensive rejection of domestic radical and socialist traditions. It was also Thompson, in his *The Poverty of Theory* (1978), who was to make the essential political point: 'In the much-publicised "revival of Marxism" in Britain in the past two decades, a mountain of thought has not yet given birth to one political mouse.'

What it had given birth to was a private literature in a private language, in which socialists could talk to each other and pretend they were a mass movement. It had also spawned a variety of vulgar Marxists, united only in their contempt for British social democracy and their belief that the only obstacle to socialism in Britain was Labour politicians. What the revival of Marxism should have produced was an independent Left able to engage sympathetically with the wider labour movement. This would have involved a recognition that there were legitimate socialist traditions other than Marxism, and that it was possible to be non-Marxist without also being anti-Marxist. This could have strengthened the political position of the Left and its ability to generate a coherent public philosophy. Without that recognition both were diminished.

So the argument here is that 'British socialism' has been subjected to a process of deconstruction, and that this cannot be separated from Labour's political travails. A process of reconstruction is now required, if this is not already too late, and that means going back to identify some of British socialism's characteristic strengths.

IN SOME QUARTERS 'Fabianism' has come to stand for the particular infirmities of British socialism. It is indicted by more red-blooded socialists for its uncompromising reformism (what Shaw called its 'resolute constitutionalism'), its unapologetic middle classness, and its administrative version of socialism. This has become a convenient caricature. Thus, in his excellent earlier article in this series, Geoff Hodgson (*NS* 4 May) refers to the Fabians' traditional opposition to 'most forms of political decentralisation' and argues that 'the movement has to rediscover from it own past the hidden traditions of non-centralist socialism'.

Even leaving aside the essentially *municipal* emphasis of classical Fabianism, or Sidney Webb's attempt in 1890 to counter the 'misapprehension' that socialism implied 'a rigidly centralised administration of all the details of life', there is the fact that the outstanding Fabian of the post-Webb generation, G.D.H. Cole, was from his guild socialist period onwards a consistent advocate of a decentralised and participatory version of socialism. 'Producer democracy' was an idea nurtured within the Fabian tradition. Moreover, the need to rediscover the 'hidden traditions' of British socialism would be less necessary if these traditions had not in recent times been so assiduously devalued and neglected.

It was also G.D.H. Cole who reconstructed the Fabian Society at the end of the 1930s, as an open house for democratic socialist discussion, education and research. This fact is worth recording, since it has been the condition of the Society's independence and, therefore, of its ability to celebrate its centenary this year. As a tolerant home for a range of ideas Fabianism has had a civilising effect on socialist argument in Britain; in the recent past it has seemed like an oasis of tolerance in a desert of sectarian discord.

Yet this is to put the Fabian contribution too negatively and defensively. Its distinctive strengths may have become unfashionable, but they have been remarkable, writ large in the social and economic structure of pre-Thatcher Britain. Ever since the first Fabians a century ago declared war on the political economy of individualism, their chosen weapons of fact gathering, tract publishing, policy framing, permeating, persuading and administering have been deployed relentlessly in the service British socialism. If for some socialists this merely evidences the limitations of Fabian 'empiricism', for others it evidences a socialist reformism that was serious about the business of reform. Its finest hour came in 1945, for in policy, style and personnel the Attlee government was a thoroughly Fabian administration.

This suggests a further point, of considerable contemporary significance. It turns on the much maligned class character of Fabianism. In the 1890s Bernard Shaw described how, a decade earlier, he had attached himself to the Fabian Society rather than the Social Democratic Federation 'solely by an instinctive feeling that the Fabian Society and not the Federation would attract the men of my own bias and intellectual habits'.

He could have included 'women', for the Fabian Society was to prove distinctive for its decidedly 'mixed' membership. What Shaw's remark points to is the extent to which Fabianism has been a recruiting sergeant for socialism among sections of the middle classes in Britain.

As such, it can be seen to have played an important role in the process whereby Labour emerged as the political umbrella for progressivism. Again, 1945 can be seen as the

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high point of this process, when Labour was called upon to implement the progressive consensus. The construction of this progressive alliance, the sense in which for over half a century to be on the (non-Communist) Left in Britain was to be Labour, if only in a J.B. Priestleyish sort of way, was a considerable political achievement. It also gives a particular significance to contemporary events. It is possible that the progressive alliance has fragmented beyond repair. This will be welcomed not only by Mrs Thatcher but by those elements on the Left who have laboured hard for just such a purifying fragmentation. The call for a popular front of progressiveness simply highlights the fact that in the past Labour *was* a popular front of this kind. Whether it can become so once again is clearly the central question of British politics.

If Fabian 'empiricism' begins to look rather different in this light, then so too does the distinctive moralism of British socialism. It was Tawney who once described British socialism as 'unashamedly ethical'. This could sometimes turn into sentimental gush, with no theoretical bite and disabling as political practice, but it did mean that socialism was grounded in the solid rock of moral argument. Socialism requires a moral philosophy, and Marxism cannot provide one (for Marx had rejected any distinction between the historically necessary and the morally desirable, and poured scorn on the 'idealism' of the petty bourgeois preoccupation with 'values'). British socialism provides the materials for a convincing treatment of key political values like equality, liberty and community, and for a persuasive public philosophy.

So the argument here is for the reconstruction of a tradition. It is a tradition of rationalism and moralism, of Fabian head and ILP heart. This combination has provided the basis, especially evident in the work of Tawney and Cole, for a philosophy and practice of democratic socialism, able to speak in a local idiom. It has provided an antidote to mere Labourism, as well as to infantile leftism. Cole's advocacy of a 'sensible extremism' is paralleled by Tawney's account (in the chapter on 'Democracy and Socialism' that he added to his *Equality* in the 1930s — when 'invitations to hunt tigers were issued by sportsmen with whom a brave man might well hesitate to shoot rabbits' — and which should be compulsory reading for every member of the Labour Party) of the character of a democratic socialist political practice which is both principled and realistic. As Tawney said then, but could have said now: 'Socialism is no longer bad politics in England, unless socialists choose to make it so, which some of them do with a quite surprising ingenuity.'

It is significant that Neil Kinnock has, instinctively, turned to Tawney. Theoretical reconstruction is part of the task of political reconstruction. Tawneyism provides the basis for a public philosophy capable of launching an assault on Thatcherism. Perhaps Mrs Thatcher will need to take Peregrine Worsthorne's advice after all. □

Anthony Wright is the author of G.D.H. Cole and Socialist Democracy *(1979) and* British Socialism: Socialist Thought from the 1880s to 1960s *(1983). He is a member of the executive committee of the Fabian Society.*

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EDUCATION

PUNISHING TEACHER

Barry Hugill reports on the damage that this year's pay negotiations has done to the morale of teachers

TEACHERS USUALLY return to school for the autumn term fresh and rejuvenated. Not so this year. The ill-feeling generated by the protracted pay negotiations in the spring and summer has not been dispelled during the long holiday. The fact that the employers in the end raised their 'last offers' from 4.5 to 5.1 per cent and achieved a settlement will have done little to change the underlying malaise.

What has so angered teachers is their awareness of the employers', and the government's, low opinion of them. In their submission to the arbitration panel appointed to decide on the salary increase for this year, the teachers argued that they are a special case deserving of more than the 4.5 per cent on offer. They pointed to the erosion of their salaries since 1974 and argued that an increase of about 30 per cent would be necessary to bring them back to where they were 10 years ago. They observed that the government had made 'special cases' of the police, doctors, dentists and nurses, and that extra funds should be made available for them as well.

The employers claimed that they could not afford more than 4.5 per cent because of government spending cuts. 'Overspending' would mean a further reduction in government grant as a consequence of the draconian penalty system introduced by Patrick Jenkin. This is not an unreasonable position and was put with as much force by 'radical' Labour authorities, such as ILEA, as well as by the Tory shires.

It is, however, slightly dishonest for local authorities could, in advance of the negotiations, have budgeted for an increase well above 4.5 per cent in the hope that their rate-grant settlement for this year would have been estimated accordingly. In all probability, Jenkin would have refused to pay up but employers would have been able to say, in all honesty, that it wasn't their fault that they couldn't afford more. In fact many Tory authorities only budgeted for an increase of 4 per cent.

It is doubtful if at any point the teachers' negotiators anticipated a final settlement much above 5 per cent, whatever the platform rhetoric. But they did expect the employers to press Sir Keith Joseph for extra for teachers who, after all, were doing a good job in difficult circumstances.

To their amazement the management panel submission to the arbitrators made it clear that in their view, the teachers deserve no more. Doug McAvoy, deputy general secretary of the NUT and leader of the teacher side during the negotiations, came out of the arbitration panel convinced that even were the Cabinet to sanction extra cash the employers would not want it. In particular he was enraged by a sentence in the management submission which read: 'The thrust of the management panel's

FINANCE

ALARM RAISING

HOW WOULD YOU react if you wanted to hire a colour television and were told you had to pay £300 *and* £20 a month rental? Naturally, knowing you can buy a good set outright for that sort of money, you would reject it out of hand.

Curiously, however, that is how much of the burglar alarm business works. Customers have been conditioned into accepting a deal that makes little sense from their point of view. In many rental contracts signed between householder — or indeed factory owner — and the security company, the customer not only pays for the cost of installation of the equipment, but also for the cost of manufacture of that equipment, sometimes with a profit mark-up; but nevertheless the customer does not get legal title to it.

The rental companies obviously like this state of affairs, largely for purely financial reasons. Because of complicated accounting techniques, renting out equipment produces a much larger initial profit than selling it. The out-and-out cowboys especially like it, because after a couple of years they can try to jack-up the rental, threatening to take away the equipment if you do not agree — which they can do because it is theirs and not yours.

The Office of Fair Trading has been looking into this situation in a desultory way for some time with no concrete results so far. Gradual realisation by the customers, however, of the poor deal they get has resulted in more and more security companies being prepared to sell outright when asked, if reluctantly. But the rental companies still have the support of the police and the insurance companies, who both like the rental arrangement, because with it goes an agreement by the rental company to maintain the equipment. This, the police believe, should mean fewer false alarms through malfunction; and vice versa for insurance companies — the alarms should work properly when faced with a burglar.

The financial attractions of alarm rental companies set against a background of strong demand for their products, has brought all sorts of stock market operators into the business. They became market darlings and their share ratings soared to unrealistic levels, only dented somewhat last year when questions about their accounting practices were raised. An exception to the glamour was Chubb, though it is the best and oldest name in the security business. It became regarded as an unadventurous, badly run company after an admittedly disastrous diversification into cash registers some years ago.

Furthermore, it persisted in a more 'conservative' — it would say responsible — accounting policy. So, as the odd-company-out in a section of 'high fliers' it became vulnerable to a take-over bid, which duly came from the Racal electronics group. After initially giving the impression they were resigned to take-over, Chubb has decided to fight — and indeed, if the effect of the attempted diversification is discounted, its record of recent management stands up well to examination in comparison with that of Racal. Once again, the issue is raised: is the stock market the best place in which to determine the future of companies like Chubb? Perhaps the customers should have a say?

City policing

The future of the stock market itself is, of course, very much in the melting pot at the moment, following last year's deal in which the government dropped threatened legal action by the Office of Fair Trading in exchange for the abolition of agreed minimum commissions on Stock Exchange deals. Its future is now largely to be determined by the Stock Exchange itself. But last week one of its more important customers, David Hopkinson, head of the M & G unit trust group, decided to intervene. He wrote in forthright terms to the chairman of the Stock Exchange, Sir Nicholas Goodison, expressing his concern that, if the Exchange was 'panicked' into radical changes, many of its traditional objectives — such as protecting private and institutional investors from fraud and false prices and helping small companies to raise capital — would suffer in a welter of conflicting interests.

Hopkinson's intervention gives the move towards statutory regulation of the City another strong push. When Professor Gower put forward earlier this year proposals for regulating the City, he believed that the only practical politics was to put forward a solution based on the self-regulatory Council for the Securities Industry. Now it looks as if the disappearance of that institution — 'formed of people representing vested interests', as Hopkinson says — is accepted as inevitable.

But what to replace it with? Hopkinson himself is in favour of professional body — presumably statutory — and points out that this does not inevitably mean it has to be a copy of the US Securities and Exchange Commission, which has always been one of the City's main fears. The mood in the rest of the City has not gone that far yet, even if it is now for compromise. As the Governor of the Bank of England also said last week: 'The important thing is finding this right half-way house between an over heavy-handed, totally statutory-based regime on the one hand and what you are inclined to call a rather easy going club approach on the other'. That will be a considerable test for Governor Leigh-Pemberton's ingenuity.

Charles Raw

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Left aims to rally TUC for stand against union law
MP defies ultimatum
Whip told MP to
Petrol bombs
at pit trouble
Sale of public sector businesses unnecessary
Inflation drops to low for year
Speedy ruling over teachers' pay urged
an rates fall
The families at war in strife-torn Notts
PM rejects inquiry
Maggie blocks
Britain 'talking to Ireland' on Ulster's future
Rebels set to defy dock
Council home prices will ignore repairs
to Belfast shootir
Steel ship decision
Three-way alliance
rate-capping
Minorities reluctant to join identity parades
UK faces long battle over lamb
N-wast build-up claim
Reds ha
Bati
the centre ground
Deal irks threat of national dock
Taking a cue from Wall Street
Britain's recovery
and the unions
blamed for pit
Trade surplus slips to £113m i
Stevas defend return of
Rail strike risk recedes as BR of
assurances to unions on job inte
Drift to work 'will continue'
Belgrano apers
banks cut base rates
m 11% to 10½%
Love-tug MP rapped
Kinnock to shed the pop image
Railmen want
Bid to end stalemate
but its objectives are political

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concern is the cumulative erosion of professional commitment'.

Phillip Merridale, Tory chairman of Hampshire education committee, and the leader of the management negotiating team, explained. Over the least few years, he said, the teachers have caused enormous disruption by strikes and working to rule. They have refused to cover for absent colleagues, to supervise lunch time breaks, or to arrange out of school activities. 'Even the NAHT (the headteachers' union) has said that heads cannot count on support of teachers. If the teachers want a 9-3.30 day and consider industrial action consistent with professionalism then we are not far away from the day when they put on a cloth cap, punch a clock, and get paid by the hour'.

Mr McAvoy is now 'advising' members to, 'monitor all of their professional commitment and activity from the start of this new term' — in other words teachers will be working to rule. As Mr McAvoy says: 'If the employers say that we don't do any of this extra work they won't be affected by our actions will they?'.

NOT SURPRISINGLY the teachers have a different view of their 'professionalism'. Their submission to the arbitrators painted a depressing picture of teachers dissatisfied with the level of their salaries, demoralised by the effects of reduced expenditure yet seeking to do their very best for the pupils. They claim that today's teacher spends more hours on producing materials and dealing with the problems of individual pupils and has to cope with the additional stress of alienated teenagers asking, not always politely, what the point of studying is when all the future holds is the dole.

The employers hold that the place to discuss the changing role of the teacher is a sub-committee of Burnham (the negotiating body) called the salary structure working party. In place of the existing scales it has been provisionally agreed by both sides that there should be just one 'professional scale'. This would eliminate the promotion log-jam that has developed with falling pupil numbers and spending cuts. In the past a competent teacher could reasonably expect promotion to a higher scale within a few years of starting the job. Now teachers of many years' standing have found themselves stuck at the top of scale 1 or 2 (there is no automatic cross-over to a higher scale).

But in return, management want written into the teachers' conditions of service an obligation not only to spend a specific amount of time preparing and marking work but also to undertake what the teachers have always described as 'voluntary duties' (mid-day meal supervision and other non-teaching activities).

A month ago the teachers might have contemplated such a deal in return for an increase, say, of 13 per cent. But the NUT have now pulled out of the salary structure talks in the face of the employers' intransigence. Behind that is the desire of the Education Minister to 'shake up' the teaching profession. He believes that a sizable number are incompetent and should be got rid of and has made no secret of his view that market forces should be left to determine salary levels. The teachers can't win as the employers accuse them of lack of professionalism and the Minister tells them that they are mere workers in the interplay of supply and demand. □

Who does television think we are?

John Ellis

TELEVISION perpetually buttonholes its audience. Like a fairground huxter, it has to hold its audience's drifting attention by any means that come to hand. Trailers, continuity announcers, pre-credit sequences, commercials, newscasters and reporters all speak directly to their audience. But they don't speak to their audience as 'you', as people different from themselves. They speak in terms of 'we'. Like all good con men, they set out to create a spurious community of interest and identity between themselves, the professionals, and their audience, the public at large.

This is clear enough when any TV interviewer says 'But surely, Mr Scargill, you can't be saying. . .' The interviewer is trying to establish a shared common sense between her/himself and the audience — a common sense that excludes Scargill, the unreasonable extremist. In this instance, anyone who agrees with Scargill is excluded from the community of address that the interviewer is creating. Television is riddled with such instances of address. The interviewer may appear to be talking to the person being interviewed, but is in reality addressing the audience — or at least a large segment of people viewing.

Television makes other assumptions about its viewers as well. It assumes common knowledges and common ignorances. Making any television programme involves a complex calculation about what the audience can be assumed to know. It's a calculation that differs slightly with the kinds of programme involved. Light entertainment assumes a knowledge of current obsessions of tabloid journalism, and the punchlines of television commercials. Rock music programmes assume a knowledge of current stars and styles — a knowledge that must be painstakingly explained in a current affairs slot. This assumption of audience knowledges, together with the habitual invocation of a community of interest, constitutes the mode of address of the programme.

It is remarkable how much similarity there is between the modes of address of almost all television programmes. Programme makers cross the invisible boundaries at their peril. They are accused of being 'wilfully obscure', of being 'elitist' if they step beyond the confines. While this is vaguely justified as a complaint, it is usually directed towards the wrong targets: at those programmes which are trying, in a modest way, to expand the horizons of television, rather than at the formulas that have become mere ritual incantations.

The fundamental problem with television's generalised level of comprehensibility is that it makes assumptions about the people it is addressing which are at variance with the real people who are watching. The result for most people is an occasional jarring note. News habitually applies the term 'housewife' to the typical shopper. This doesn't fit women who go out to work or men who shop. Momentarily, they are excluded, made to feel marginal in their society.

Even more marginalising is television's general assumption that its audience is white. The assumption is so pervasive that attempts to address black audiences directly have run into severe difficulties. Channel 4 introduced programmes for ethnic minorities (*Black on Black, Asian Eye*), and BBC2 followed suit (*Ebony*). Each does its best to conform to television's generalised mode of address. They give the impression that they were made for me, a white man, to watch. Inevitably, this produces the feeling that they are looking into 'minority communities' from outside, from the terrain of 'the majority'. They have been unable so far to get out of this bind, to produce programmes which speak to a particular sector from *within* that sector.

There are some few exceptions: programmes for non-English speakers, for example, or feature films from India and Africa that occasionally appear on Channel 4 on a Sunday afternoon (the current All-India Goldies season), or late at night (Eleventh Hour's Africa on Africa series). But in the main, television has definite ideas about its audience. It constructs a community of address that is based on a series of exclusions. Behind the cheerful 'we' there is the implied 'not-we'. The strength of television depends on its ability to include most of the people practically all of the time. But those whose attitudes or cultures exclude them from this community for most of television's output are not only deprived of entertainment and information. They are also stigmatised.

For television's community of address is as casually racist all of the time as it is casually centralist when it comes to politics. It buttonholes as many viewers as it can by constructing a collusive 'we'. It fleshes out this 'we' by its series of calculations about what the audience will understand. Everyone and everything else needs to be explained as they are seen as exceptions or problems. Their demands and aspirations have to be justified defensively.

The only solution to this casual racism is to abandon, in a substantial part of television's output, any kind of fictional 'address to the mass' along the lines that television has currently constructed for itself. And the experiences of Channel 4's programmes for ethnic minorities shows how difficult and how little understood this job actually is. □

John Ellis produces Visions, *Channel 4's cinema programme.*

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DIARY

Claudia Wright

Washington

It was one of those local, relatively small tragedies that happen in American cities once in a while. A drunken man lost control of his car early Saturday evening two weeks ago and it ran at high speed into a line of people waiting at a downtown bus stop. Seven people were killed — five of them from a single family. Los Angeles had one of these 'vehicular homicides' recently; New York has had several. The local press noted the driver in the Washington incident had just been released from prison on parole. Officials of the city's Crime Victims Program announced that the dead family wasn't eligible for financial aid to pay for their burial because one of the victims had an insurance policy. At the funeral service, one of the ministers tried to find solace in what had happened. At least the dead family, he said, 'don't have to worry about crime any more, electric bills, or pain.' Washington — 'the most important city in the world' runs the slogan of a local bank — is that kind of place.

○

To the genuine *aficionados* of the town, the summer months when Congress is in recess are a welcome relief from those whose social ambition drives them to the resorts of Long Island, Cape Cod, and the Maine coast — whose addresses they make known to the society columnists before they leave. The excuse for the departure is always the same — the intense humidity which rolls on to the town in June and remains until mid-September, building up to a climax each afternoon with a skyful of lightning, mighty thunderclaps, and a monsoon downpour. In Gore Vidal's novel of Washington, his home town, the native taste for such weather is revealed in the characters' proclivity for making passionate love while the storm rages outside. As Washington is the most densely wooded city in the country, tree limbs are always being toppled by these storms onto power lines, blacking us out and thereby adding an erotic alibi the social climbers at the beach generally lack. The mark of recent arrivals in Washington is not only their absence from town in August, but their hermetic sealing of all household apertures when at home. If the new class here makes love between 5 and 7, it is to the wheeze and whine of air-conditioning.

○

It has come as no surprise therefore that Mrs Nancy Reagan, the belle of the *arrivistes*, should have been unable to sleep on two recent evenings because of the chirping of a cricket in her White House bedroom. That she made this known publicly is a puzzle since she has tried so hard to establish her image as an earthy outdoorswoman, albeit from Southern California. High above the ornamental White House garden — which President Kennedy had planted to ape those he had seen in the royal houses of Europe — Mrs Reagan, in common with other members of the hermetically sealed class, resents the virtuosity of the town's insects.

○

In the film *Terms of Endearment* there is a scene in a Midwestern supermarket when a check-out clerk is rude to one of the film's leading characters. He reacts by telling her that her manners are out of place — they belong in New York. Nothing remarkable about that, but in Washington the cinema audiences burst into applause at this line. This is just one sign of its growing assertiveness — after a century of Southern charm and a provincial inferiority complex, Washington has decided to compete with New York for urbanity and sophistication. Theatre producers already try out their shows here before risking Broadway, and in five years it is expected there will be 90 cinemas catering to the local audience. Where else but Washington could one stand in line behind the former director of the CIA, Richard Helms, as he asks the cinema box office for his senior citizen's discount?

○

There are other signs of sophistication: in a city that is totally lacking either an Irish or a French background, there are now popular mass celebrations of St Patrick's Day and the Storming of the Bastille. Wine merchants have begun to offer bordeaux 'futures', and the *Beaujolais Nouveau* arrives by Concorde the very afternoon the Parisians are opening their bottles, and at least 30 minutes before New York drinkers get it. Two years ago a butcher who called his establishment a 'meat boutique' went broke — now delicatessens are springing up all over town. Miniature vegetables are the current rage — diminutive aubergines, cabbages, artichokes, and squash — and old-fashioned bakeries that couldn't tell the difference between a *baguette* and an *epée* are being remodelled for the catering trade. Mocha eclairs are driving chocolate doughnuts off the market — or at least out to the suburbs.

○

The public morals of Washington have long been the product of an uneasy alliance between the white real estate interests, who control the mayor, and the black church ministers, who think they do. The latter lost the fight against a town lottery because the revenues help to keep the city from raising property taxes, but the two sides are united in their campaign to drive prostitution and strip clubs from the potentially lucrative real estate they currently occupy.

○

I remember taking a senior Whitehall civil servant on a summer evening tour of the city three years ago, when he was asked by a young woman at a traffic light a question he didn't understand. I translated it for him. She had leaned into the car window and said: 'Would you like a suck or a fuck?' That choice has now all but disappeared from the downtown streets, and pressure from the District Attorney and the Internal Revenue Service is rapidly closing the pseudo-massage establishments. The result is that sex is being driven up in cost and pushed out to the respectable avenues where it is conducted under the guise of escort services with names like '*Mais oui*' and '*Jane Austen*'. They were raided a week ago. If the pressure keeps up, only the porno-telephone services will be able to survive. After an audit last year showed that Defense Department officials might be making $25,000 worth of monthly calls to these services, the Pentagon ordered the telephone company to block all Defense Department lines trying to connect with a popular New York number. This year no doubt there is a Washington substitute.

ROGER WODDIS

The Charge of the Left Brigade

Len Murray, TUC general secretary, quoted Tennyson's poem at the Brighton conference.

Half a year, half a year,
  Half a year stronger;
All who had doubted them cried,
  'God, how much longer?'
'Forward, the Left Brigade!'
'Victory!' posters said.
Miners were ready to bear
  Hardship and hunger.

Lyons to right of them,
Buckton to left of them,
Basnett behind them
  Talked of committal.
Loud rang the Brighton bell,
While Tory faces fell:
They who had been through hell
Spoke with a single breath,
Turned on those keen to sell,
Spurned Eric Hammond's line —
  Little by little.

Who wanted hopes to fade?
O the wild charges laid!
  What a daft beggar!
Honour the show they made!
Honour the Left Brigade,
  Loved by MacGregor!

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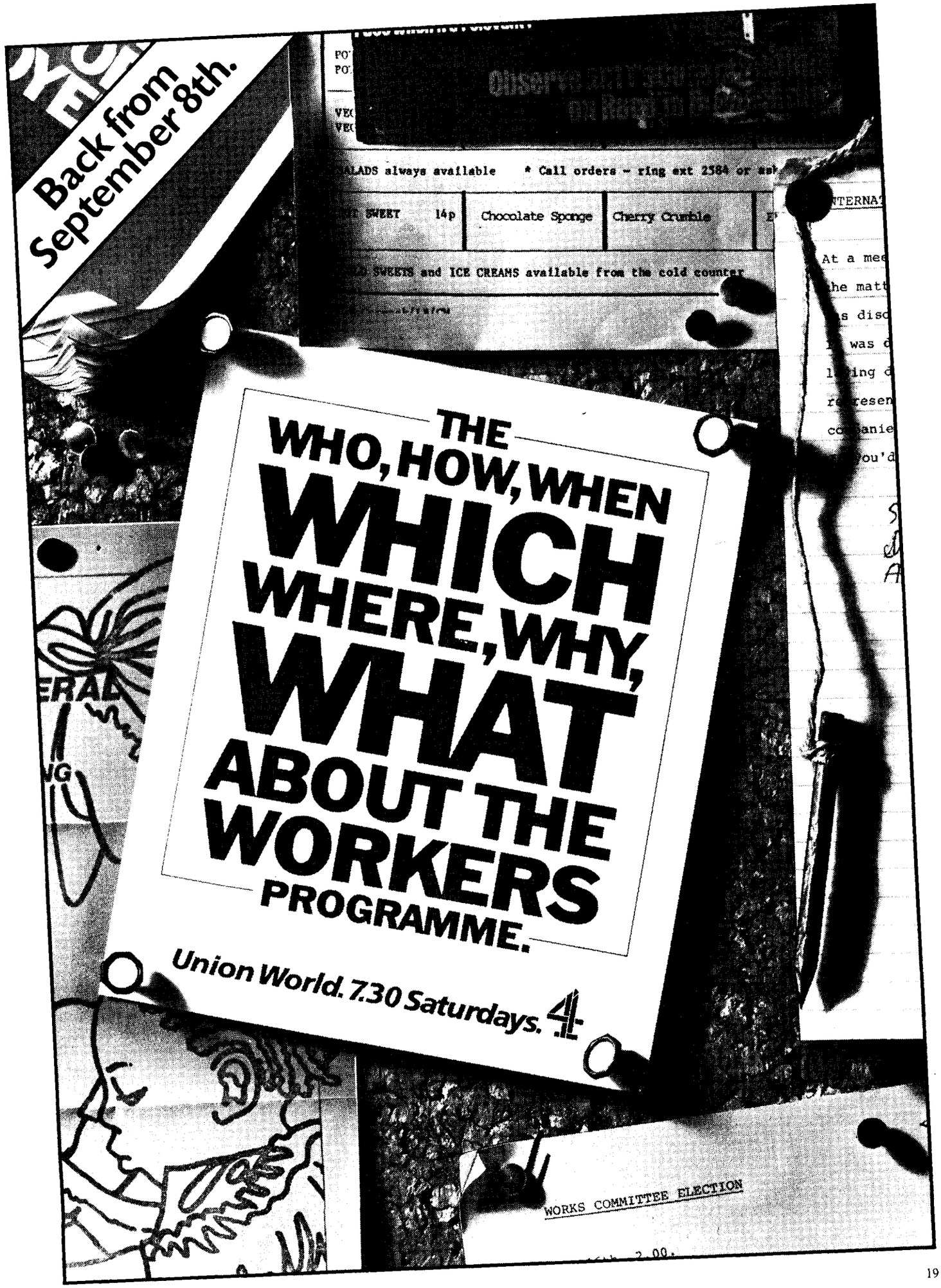
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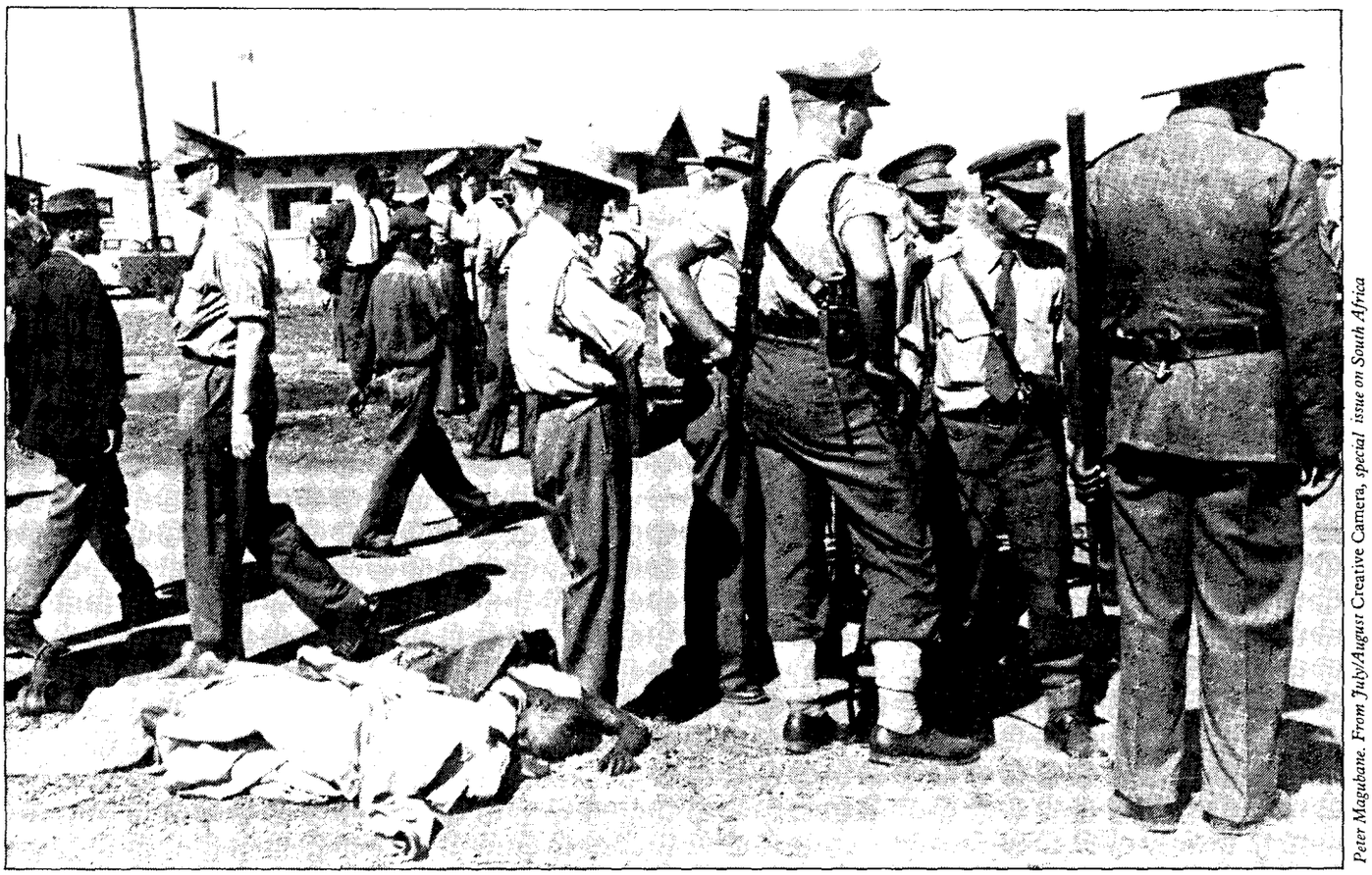

Peter Magubane. From July/August Creative Camera, special issue on South Africa

MUCH IS ROTTEN IN THIS STATE

Far from creating the desired aura of peace and democracy, South Africa's elections have provoked furious protest and have further challenged the legitimacy of the government. The price Botha may pay is withdrawal from Namibia, reports Howard Barrell

Botswana

TENSION has been growing for months in South Africa's Black townships, with rising unemployment and inflation over 12 per cent. The police killings in Sharpeville and other townships are evidence of renewed Black militancy.

But of even greater worry to the South African government is its near total failure to 'sell' its new tripartite constitution to the Coloured and Indian sections of the population, whose support it requires against the Black majority.

How could they explain why only one in five South African Coloureds and even fewer South African Indians had bought the neo-apartheid ploy and decided to vote for segregated chambers in the new three-house legislature to be introduced in September?

It was left to the outlawed African National Congress (ANC) publicity secretary Thabo Mbeki to comment: 'They just cannot understand that the people know their own minds, can decide for themselves, and have thoroughly rejected the new constitution.'

South African Blacks — even the relatively less underprivileged Coloured and Indian sections — are just not in the market to be used to prop up the legitimacy of the Botha government — hence its deepening crisis.

Notable over the past three weeks in the land of apartheid was the militancy shown by young Coloureds and Indians. More than 700,000 Coloured school children and university students boycotted classes on polling day. They were joined by all Black African universities and thousands of Indian youths followed suit a week later, taking on police with stones and petrol bombs around Johannesburg.

Perhaps most serious for the Botha government were the open expressions of support for the banned revolutionary ANC which emerged from the floor at meetings across the country during the campaign for an election boycott, led largely by the United Democratic Front (UDF), an alliance of about 560 mainly Black organisations. 'Oliver . . .' a voice would often shout from within the anonimity of a crowd. 'Tambo' would come the unison response — and the chant would continue. The ANC president might be in exile, but he's 'home' in the hearts, minds and lungs of many thousands.

The Nkomati accord between Pretoria and Frelimo limiting ANC presence in Mozambique to a 10-person diplomatic mission may yet prove the major setback for the ANC that Botha hoped for. But hitherto the signs are unconvincing. The ANC has been forced to focus its struggle inside South Africa, strengthening its support base inside the country. And the recognition by Pretoria that the ANC was a serious threat, provided it with a major propaganda victory among Black South Africans.

The Botha government's response was to mount a crude propaganda campaign, using the state media, alleging the UDF was a front of the banned ANC — a treasonable offence — and then to detain 43 boycott leaders, among them UDF president Archie Gumede and the UDF publicity secretary 'Terror' Lekota on the eve of the Coloured poll.

Ironically, the short-term effect seemed only to be a boost the UDF's credibility, and to convince a few who, until then, had intended voting on the grounds that the new constitution 'should be given a chance' that the apartheid leopard was incapable of changing its spots.

Law and order Minister Louis Le Grange, justifying the detentions, said South Africa had moved into a 'potentially revolutionary'

Man and child lie dead at the feet of policemen, Sharpeville 1960

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situation. Indeed. And so it will remain until a constitution is devised in which the country's 23 million Black African majority are given the kind of influence on central state power that their numbers warrant. The Coloured and Indian sections of the Black population have shown convincingly that, in the short term at least, the government can forget about seducing them into an alliance.

Long-term government strategy is to create a neo-apartheid confederal system which will ensure *de facto* white political and economic rule. At its root are two principles: 'Divide-and-rule', and an alliance in government of ethnic, economic and bureaucratic elites, an idea derived from that dubious school of pluralism calling itself 'consociationalism'.

The Black African majority will be divided into 10 tribal 'unions' and be expected to realise their political aspirations through the 'parliaments' of the impoverished ethnic 'homelands'. These tribal 'parliaments' or 'cabinets' will then meet in a loose, as yet undisclosed, confederal relationship with the white, Coloured and Indian chambers set up under the current constitutional changes. And those Black Africans with the pass law right to live permanently in what apartheid calls 'white' South Africa will have a special body created through which they can supposedly voice their interests (an all-white cabinet committee is currently looking into the constitutional future of these 'urban' Blacks). The base line of the Botha government's strategy is: anything but majority rule in a unitary South Africa.

The fact that only the supporters of Botha's National Party — numbering just over one million — want this kind of future should not be mistaken for sufficient deterrent. Interior Minister F.W. de Klerk has already said that he regards the official 31 per cent poll in the Coloured election (18 per cent if based on the total number of Coloured adults) and the official 20 per cent Indian poll (16 per cent of Indian adults) as sufficient mandate for the current constitutional changes.

The first priority the new three-chamber legislature will set itself will probably be how to muster as much 'credibility capital' as possible: to spend vast amounts of money to uplift dramatically Coloured and Indian living standards in order to show that it pays to 'participate'. For this to happen, the Botha government will, by way of a start, probably have to pull out of the expensive war against SWAPO in Namibia. Botha and other government ministers have recently made statements to the effect that at more than one million Rand a day, the war with Namibia is proving a financial millstone.

A second priority will be some sort of understanding between the white chamber and the collaborating Coloured and Indian parties, so that the Coloured and Indian parliamentarians are not seen to be partners in apartheid legislation against the Black Africa majority; but at the same time their anti-apartheid rhetoric must be kept at manageable levels. This will attract much-inflated press interest, and it must, from Botha's point of view, be carefully stage-managed.

What the Coloured and Indian elections have shown is that the exasperation with the Botha government is on a much larger scale than was ever previously apparent. □

MIDDLE EAST

INVISIBLE PRISONS

Alan George on the camps where Israel may be holding 'disappeared' civilians

LAST NOVEMBER, amid a fanfare of publicity, Israel exchanged 4,591 Palestinian and Lebanese detainees for six of its soldiers held by the PLO since the 1982 invasion of Lebanon. One hundred of the Arabs were released from prisons within Israel, but the rest had been held at Israel's notorious Ansar prison camp near the south Lebanese town of Nabatiyeh.

Following the prisoner exchange, the Israelis said Ansar was completely empty. The Red Cross, which has had regular access to the camp, says tht it was in fact closed — but only for a matter of days. The first new prisoners were already interned by December. In January there were 467 Palestinians and Lebanese in Ansar, almost all of them civilians detained without charge, let alone trial. The latest figure — for June — was 692. Ansar is the only Israeli prison in south Lebanon to which the Red Cross has been granted access; there are believed to be others.

The Ansar camp, which former detainees have likened to a concentration camp, was set up during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. The camp is sited on a barren hillside, exposed to the summer sun and winter rains. Barbed wire fencing and a series of watch towers form the perimeter. Prisoners are housed in tents (although some hutted accommodation was installed last year), and conditions in the overcrowded camp are terrible. In particular, medical services to the inmates — many of whom were wounded — are rudimentary.

Faced with mounting civilian and armed resistance to its occupation, Israel has this year stepped up its intimidation of the Arabs in south Lebanon, favouring detention without trial. On 16 May, for example, 2,000 Israeli soldiers, backed by 200 tanks, staged a 'clean-up' operation in the Palestinian refugee camp of Ein al Hilweh, near the port city of Sidon. Thirty houses were blown up, and more than 150 people were arrested. Later in May they made a series of mass arrests in the camp. Many were later released, but some have not been seen again, and are thought to be held in Ansar.

This type of intimidation is conducted in concert with allied local right-wing militias. There are two main groups: the Lebanese Forces, which are the military arm of the Maronite Christian Phalangist Party; and the militia of the late Sa'ad Haddad, which before the invasion controlled a strip along the Israel-Lebanon border, but whose area of operations now extends throughout the Israeli-occupied area. On 4 April the two groups united to form the 'South Lebanon Army', which is totally dependent on the Israelis. The new force is commanded by General Antoine Lahad, a retired Lebanese Army officer known for his extreme right-wing views.

The way in which Israel uses the militias was highlighted in the village of Jibchitt, 23 kilometres south east of Sidon. On 16 February the Imam (religious head) of the village was murdered because of his refusal to collaborate with the Israelis. His death prompted a wave of demonstrations in the village, and a general strike throughout south Lebanon. On the night of 27 March, Israeli forces descended on Jibchitt to 'pacify' the village. After fierce clashes with stone-throwing villagers, the Israelis secured control. Rightist militiamen were then allowed in and 500 residents were detained. Most were taken to Ansar, and by the end of April more than 50 were still there.

Israel is also continuing to hold prisoners from south Lebanon on its own territory, at seven or more secret army detention centres, including Atlit near Haifa. This is a clear violation of the Geneva Conventions, which stipulate that persons arrested in an occupied country must be imprisoned only in that country.

Under last November's prisoner exchange, over 140 Ansar detainees who were to have been freed were quietly transferred to prisons within Israel. Most are held incommunicado in Atlit, and the Israelis have spurned pleas from Amnesty International and other human rights bodies that the names of the prisoners be made public and that they receive full access to lawyers. □

INDIA

A THORN REMOVED

Harish Khare reports the case of a nuclear critic

New Delhi

OLD INDIA had its hallowed symbols — child marriage, the venerable caste hierarchy. The New India has its own symbols — the Nehru dynasty, the defence budget, and the nuclear establishment. To question the Nehru dynasty is to commit blasphemy; to doubt the defence expenditure is sacrilege; but to mock the nuclear establishment is to invite excommunication — as Dhirendra Sharma discovered when he critically examined the goals and performance of India's nuclear programme.

A convenor of a 'Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy' (and a moving spirit behind India's incipient anti-nuclear movement), Dhirendra Sharma is a professor in the Centre for the Study of Science Policy at Jawaharlal Nehru University (where the deans like to pretend that they are running a 'Harvard of the Third World'). Sharma has raised his voice to question the economic and technological viability (and desirability) of a nuclear programme for India.

Last year Sharma published a book, *India's Nuclear Estate*, trenchantly highlighting unexamined aspects of safety, waste handling, storage, and disposal problems in nuclear programmes. His refrain was that Indian

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policy-makers, politicians and technocrats 'are indifferent, if not ignorant, of the economic and environmental consequences of nuclear energy'. The book details how a handful of scientists monopolised decision-making in the Atomic Energy Commission and how other scientists, no less brilliant but with different perceptions and orientations, were eased out. His contention is that the directors of nuclear establishments are not representative of working scientists and engineers in India. Above all, Sharma's book touched a sore spot: total absence of public accountability in the nuclear management. Sharma concludes that unless these giant technological plants were opened to public scrutiny, the very essence of an open and liberal policy would get eroded. The Atomic Energy Commission and Department of Atomic Energy bosses were definitely not amused..

Then, Sharma's Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy made an open appeal to the Commonwealth Heads of Governments meeting in November 1983 in New Delhi. Here was Prime Minister Indira Gandhi playing the world's peace-maker, and this two-bit professor was raising irritating issues of a dangerous nuclear future. Something had to be done.

That something was a knock on Sharma's door 'in the dark hours of a cold night' on 16 December. A special messenger informed him that he had been transferred to the School of Languages. A definite but clumsy effort to silence the mocking bird. The extent of the nuclear establishment's hand in this decision against Sharma can be inferred but not proved. But soon after the University was given a grant worth nearly £9.5 million to start the first academic centre for nuclear research.

For its part, the nuclear establishment, and particularly its present czar, Dr Raja Ramana, has never gladly suffered criticism. At no point have Ramana and his coterie permitted the critics to raise the fundamental question of desirability of nuclear power for India. When *The Times of India* (whose editorial page carries lucid apologies for Mrs Gandhi's authoritarianism) published a series of articles detailing poor security and maintenance standards at various nuclear plants, Ramana called a press conference to denounce the exercise as 'unpatriotic'.

Interestingly, Sharma finds himself isolated within the university. No senior faculty member came to his support, nor did the teachers' association lodge any protest at the violation of principle that 'the transfer of a faculty member from one Centre to another may [only] be made with the written concurrence of both the Centre as well as the faculty member concerned'.

Jawaharlal Nehru University's teachers like to think of themselves as 'leftist' and 'progressive' (though few criticise Mrs Gandhi's infringements of civil liberties). Initially the 'left' teachers found it easy to turn a blind eye to Sharma's discomfiture, because the rumour-mills had branded him a 'CIA agent'.

It was not until Noam Chomsky and others openly supported Sharma that many of the professors felt a twinge of remorse. Still none of them supported Sharma publicly. If each university is so dependent upon the State's patronage, therefore, can academics ever pursue critical inquiry? □

CAN'T PAY, WON'T PLAY

The financial crisis which has been forced onto the Third World is likely to come home to roost, writes David Ward

IN 1973 THE OPEC nations had the entire world economy over a barrel. Today another group of developing countries, the debtor nations, have placed us precariously on top of the banking equivalent of a house of cards. If the Latin Americans, owing some $350 billion of the Third World's total $810 billion debt, refuse to pay — or simply cannot — then the bottom will fall out of the international financial system, precipitating a new world economic recession.

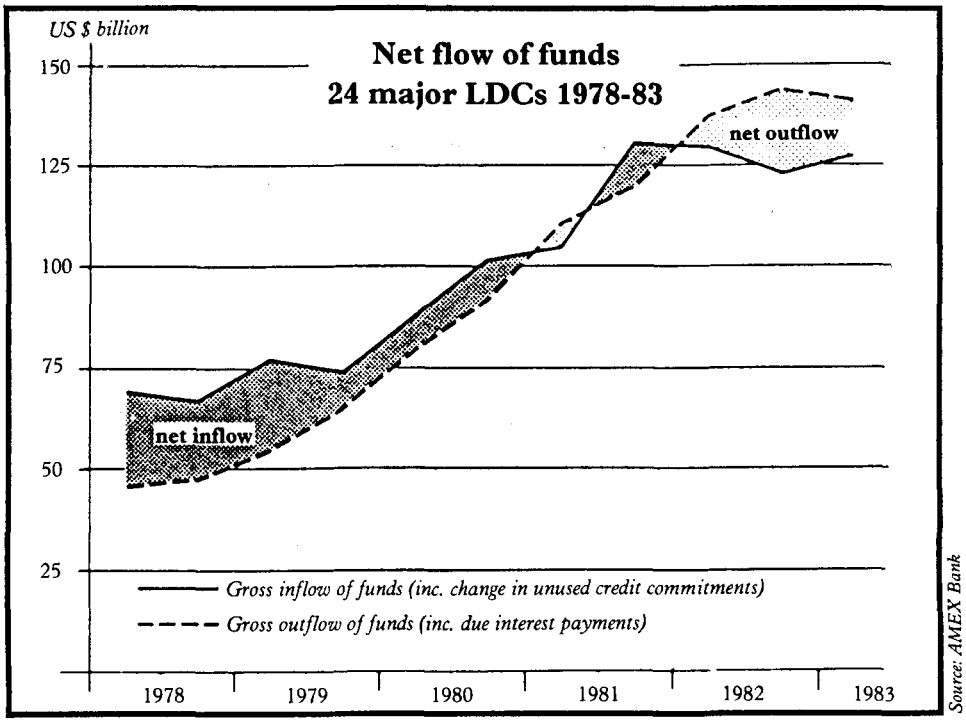
This month a series of international meetings will force this ignored issue high up the political agenda. Next week the 11 major Latin American borrowers will be meeting in Argentina for a 'debtors' summit'. Also next week the Commonwealth Secretariat is publishing a report by a Group of Experts chaired by Lord Lever, the former Labour Treasury Minister. The Lever report, 'The Debt Crisis and the World Economy', will be presented to the Commonwealth Finance Ministers Meeting in Toronto on 19-20 September.

The debtors and the Lever Group are severely critical of the Western industrialised countries' response to the debt crisis. With their sights set on the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund in Washington at the end of the month, both will be recommending strategies to defuse the debt crisis which place a heavy emphasis on government intervention and the use of public resources. Such Keynesian-style remedies are anathema to the free market doctrines of Mrs Thatcher, Chancellor Kohl and President Reagan. But increasingly, financial experts both in government and banking acknowledge that official intervention is crucial to restore stability to the international payments system.

Indeed, there is a growing awareness that the post 1979 monetarist experiment is in large measure the cause of the Third World's financial chaos. The origins of the debt crisis can be traced back to the mid 1970s and the massive increase in commercial bank lending. At that time, the European banks were literally awash with dollars deposited by the oil producing countries, which they 'recycled' to other capital hungry developing countries, especially the middle income nations of Latin America.

With minimal regulation by official sources the private banking system eagerly took in the flow of dollars and lent it on to new borrowers. The developing countries took the opportunity of the low interest rates and high inflation of the mid-1970s to borrow heavily. By the end of the decade, however, the global economic climate changed dramatically. A second oil price rise in 1979 coincided with the electoral successes of the 'new right'. In close succession, governments were elected in Britain and the United States committed to carry out restrictive monetary policies.

FOR THE Third World the monetarist experience was disastrous. The combined impact of public spending cuts and high interest rates in the industrialised countries was



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The big Third World debtors

	What they owe (US$ billions)	*Debt service ratios**
Algeria	15.4	29.3
Argentina	43.6	132.8
Brazil	93.0	115.5
Cameroon	2.5	22.8
Chile	17.9	80.0
Colombia	11.8	32.0
Costa Rica	4.1	45.5
Ecuador	6.8	91.2
Indonesia	25.0	17.4
Ivory Coast	7.0	45.6
South Korea	40.1	23.4
Malaysia	13.0	8.2
Mexico	89.0	127.7
Morocco	13.0	67.6
Nigeria	12.0	18.3
Peru	11.8	89.1
Philippines	24.6	79.0
Sudan	8.0	68.4
Thailand	11.0	20.6
Tunisia	4.5	18.6
Turkey	17.0	19.8
Uruguay	4.2	47.5
Venezuela	34.0	78.2
Yugoslavia	20.5	25.0

** Repayments of debt and interest as a percentage of exports of goods and services.*

Source: American Express: International Debt — Banks and the LDC.

quickly transmitted to the developing nations. They found themselves caught between drastically reduced demand for their exports (mainly primary commodities) and rising costs for imports of energy, manufactured goods and above all, capital.

The 'interest rate shock' is estimated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Paris to have caused a doubling of Third World interest payments between 1979 and 1982 from $25 billion to $50 billion. The most spectacular increase in average interest costs was for 'floating' interest debt which jumped from 8.4 per cent in 1978 to 17.1 per cent in 1982.

The depth of the crisis only became clear after the near default of Mexico in the Autumn of 1982, followed soon after by similar payments difficulties in Brazil, Venezuela, Argentina and Nigeria among others. In response, the industrialised countries opted for a crisis management approach involving minimal government intervention. This so-called 'Band-Aid' solution involves ad hoc, case-by-case, negotiations to reschedule a country's debt. In order to prevent a formal default fresh loans are provided and the original payment terms are extended. Meanwhile, the country concerned must negotiate a loan from the International Monetary Fund involving the traditional harsh austerity measures of devaluation and public spending cuts.

The rescheduling process (which occurred in 35 countries last year) is designed to ensure above all that the loans remain 'performing', that is, paying the interest. A non-performing loan, of course, becomes a liability for the banks, many of whom have committed two to three times their capital and reserves to developing countries.

In the Autumn of 1982, the US Federal Reserve quickly eased US monetary policy and dropped interest rates, alleviating the immediate problems facing the major debtors. Recently the OECD admitted that without the fall it is doubtful that the debt crisis could have remained manageable in 1983.

Prior to the London Summit of the seven leading industrialised countries in June, the heads of government from seven Latin American countries delivered an appeal to the summit. The seven countries — Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela — all face acute financial difficulties and urged a reduction of interest rates. Just two weeks after the London Summit, however, US interest rates began to climb again, making a mockery of the Summit Communique's commitment to reduce interest rates and further infuriating the hard-pressed debtor nations.

FORCED TO take their own initiatives, at the end of June the 11 Latin American debtors staged a 'debtors' summit' at Cartagena, Colombia to discuss a joint strategy to cope with their massive debt burden. The summit threatened to cause an explosive confrontation between the debtors on the one hand — with the possibility of organising a debtors' cartel — and the Western banks, their governments and the IMF on the other. But radical proposals to suspend repayments were blocked by Brazil and Mexico, countries which have already accepted IMF austerity programmes.

It seems that the industrialised countries have, at least temporarily, pre-empted the more intransigent debtors like Argentina. (Significantly the Alfonsin Government was quick to offer to host the second debtors' summit next week, making it clear that the banks and the IMF will not have it all their own way.) The carrot on offer is 'multi-year rescheduling', involving negotiations to stretch out repayments and loan terms over a much longer period. Only countries that have swallowed the IMF's medicine and are restoring their financial 'discipline' will qualify. Mexico is negotiating the first 'multi-year rescheduling' of its $90 billion debt, to be repaid over an extended 14-year period at more generous levels of interest.

The 'Bigger Band-Aid' approach, however, still fails to answer the more long term and fundamental issues thrown up by the debt crisis. Many Third World debtors have undertaken drastic measures to restore their balance of payments, requiring huge cutbacks in imports, including capital goods and essentials that are the prerequisite of economic development.

As a result, developing countries are sacrificing their real development prospects to protect the profits of Western banks. In January this year, Tom Clausen, President of the World Bank, admitted that developing countries 'are paying back more to the banks than the banks are lending'. The Bank has estimated that the net transfer in private loans to the developing countries was $21 billion in 1983. 'It is premature', Clausen remarked, 'for developing countries as a group to be transferring resources to high income countries on this scale'. And a special paper of the American Express Bank Review notes that: 'While naturally debtors are one day expected to repay credits, the real repayment was not expected to occur so soon in the case of capital hungry developing countries'.

Furthermore it is unlikely that the major debtors will be able to sustain continued export surpluses. The Latin Americans are relying heavily on the recovery in the United States to find outlets for their export drive. Inter-regional trade between the debtors has all but collapsed, creating an acute dependency on the progress of the US economy. If the predicted slowdown in the US recovery occurs, together with increasing protectionist measures to cushion US industry, Latin American will suffer a serious cutback in export opportunities. Moreover, if Latin America is to repay its debts with money earned from exports, Western countries must be willing to import. And, as yet, that has not been acknowledged. □

This England

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□Since Orwell's essay, the English murder has continued its sad decline. The principal cause is something most of us can support: the greater liberality of the divorce laws. Why spend weeks like Mrs Maybrick scraping arsenic off fly-papers to put in your husband's tea, when you can now divorce him by post? — *Observer* (A.G. Rogers)

□People quite often get peppered on the grouse moors. It is an everyday occurrence. — *The Times* (Michael De-la-Noy)

□For those southerners on picket duty in the East Midlands coalfields the *Police Review* has considerately printed a glossary of common phrases in the local dialect. For instance 'Ayyup miduck' is not a report of a petty offence against an aquatic bird, but a cheery morning greeting. — *Daily Telegraph* (George Moor)

LENIN AND THE END OF POLITICS

A J POLAN

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Bernard Crick

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LETTERS

A land of pirates

Adrian Liddell Hart, Stroud, Glos.

Why all the fuss about the latest revelations on the Belgrano and the possible use of Polaris against Argentina?

The British have always been known as pirates and have been the first to break international law if it seemed expedient to do so. When, for example, Churchill ordered his reluctant admirals to sink the unprepared French warships at Oran in 1940, with the loss of two thousand French sailors, it appeared to the Commander-in-Chief in the Mediterranean to be 'an act of sheer treachery which was as injudicious as it was unnecessary' (A Sailor's Odyssey by Admiral of the Fleet Viscount Cunningham).

This move, too, was enthusiastically supported by MPs of both parties and by newspaper editors eg Kingsley Martin of the *New Statesman* and Michael Foot of the *Evening Standard*, in the name of resistance to Fascist aggression. More important, it had American clearance — and, indeed, its main object was to impress the Americans with a view to getting American aid.

Secondly, the possible use of Polaris (or Trident) is inherent in the rationale of the British independent deterrent, as initiated and maintained by successive Labour and Tory Governments. Although NATO and CND supporters alike pretend that it makes a significant contribution to the defence of the West or the Cold War, it only makes sense as a last resort in safeguarding 'vital British interests'; that is to say, though it is inexpedient to admit this publicly, of deterring — or *diverting* — a conventional attack on this island (or, by extension, other British islands) which we can't trust the Americans to risk their skins resisting.

Temptations of faction

Oliver Owen, Hove, Sussex

Mary Harron (*NS* 31 August) refers to the moral aspect of dramatisation of historical events, of such versions becoming fixed on our minds as true. How right she is, though the problem is broader than moral.

A number of expressions have been used with, one senses, various degrees of embarrassment by the promoters; from 'dramatised reconstruction' to the telling but short-lived Americanism, 'faction'. There cannot be much doubt about this deliberate blurring of the distinction between fact and fiction, or that this fashion in entertainment puts a powerful instrument into the hands of propagandists, re-writers of history, and the synthesisers of the unrecorded but vital detail.

At the same time it seems that many honest creators can scarcely avoid this form and its techniques. May this not even heighten the dangers, in lowering our guard?

On closer examination . . .

Martin Cair, Shanklin, Isle of Wight

James Page (Letters 31 August), replying to Piers Brendan's 'Totum and Taboo', makes two interesting claims about monarchal and republican forms of government. He claims, firstly, that 'the best governed countries in the world are monarchies' and, secondly, that 'most republics become dictatorships'. These claims should be examined more closely.

In making his first claim Page assumes a certain causal relation: monarchies lead to better government. Better government is then defined in terms of 'freedom' and the 'standard of living'. However, an entirely different causal relation could be claimed. For example, we could hypothesise that higher standards of living (better government) allowed, or lead to, a monarchal system: in countries with a low standard of living the glaring inequities inherent within a monarchal system make its continuation totally unacceptable to the population. Page offers no evidence in support of his causal relation as opposed to this, or any other, hypothesis.

In making his second claim Page offers us the startlingly misleading comparison between European monarchies on one hand and South American and African republics on the other. This comparison does indeed suggest that his claim 'republics become dictatorships of varying degrees of unpleasantness' is correct. If, however, we use the slightly more logical comparison of European monarchies (eg UK, Sweden, Belgium) and European republics (eg France, West Germany, Switzerland) then Page's second claim is called into serious doubt.

Ian Coldwell, London W12

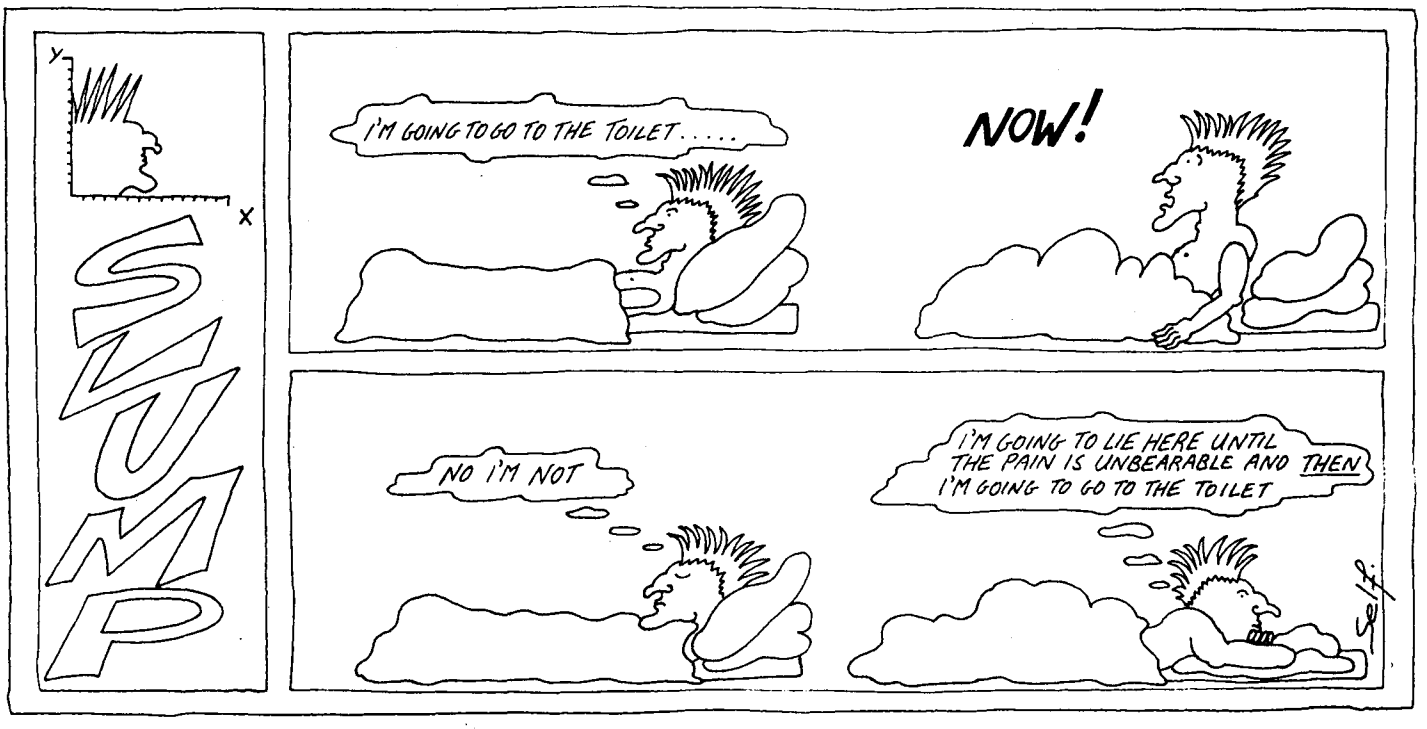
Piers Brendan's article 'Totem and Taboo' drew my attention to a glaring oversight in the policy of the present government. When most other national assets are being sold off the monarchy remains untouched. Yet it is surely a prime candidate for privatisation. The gathering together of Crown Lands, jewels, palaces and art treasures into 'Britqueen plc' must be an ideological imperative for the government. The chance of a share in the monarchy would prove irresistible to millions at home and overseas, particularly if it brought with it some entitlement to be photographed wearing the Imperial State Crown or walking the corgis. The revenue which the government could raise from such a venture would be inestimable.

The rather fainthearted way in which the monarchy has sought to justify itself economically would not be tolerated in any other company. It must now prove that it is able to compete in the marketplace.

Abusing drug abuse

Michael Meacher MP, House of Commons, London SW1

Jock Young (*NS* 24 August) calls for policies to combat heroin in his article 'Heroin Hoax'. The Home Office report on the Misuse of Drugs goes some way towards meeting this need when it identifies the importance of 'improving the general well being of society, including measures for redistributing wealth and reducing unemployment'. Proposals like these are clearly at odds with everything the Tories stand for and not surprisingly the government's response to drug abuse has been lamentable.


Y
X
SLUMP
I'M GOING TO GO TO THE TOILET.....
NOW!
NO I'M NOT
I'M GOING TO LIE HERE UNTIL THE PAIN IS UNBEARABLE AND THEN I'M GOING TO GO TO THE TOILET

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The DHSS's much vaunted £7 million for local initiatives is a derisory amount — less than the profits drug smugglers are reported to be raking in in a single week. Yet the importance of a co-ordinated and comprehensive approach to even recognise the existence of drug abuse and recognising the major contribution which voluntary agencies are making — cannot be too strongly emphasised. Unless vital cash resources are made available to bolster the work of both agencies, Britain is in danger of entering a major and possible irreparable health crisis.

Jock Young is right to detail the need for measures to tighten up on drug smuggling, yet when this matter was raised in a recent Parliamentary debate, with the Opposition pointing out that 1,000 customs jobs have gone since 1979, Home Officer Minister David Mellor could only respond that 'those who clamour for more customs searches would be the first to protest at the delays which would cause frustration at airports.'

The Civil and Public Servants Union has produced a detailed report on staff reductions and the subsequent 400 per cent increase in drug smuggling. Far from treating their case with derision, the government should be meeting the unions for urgent discussions.

Armchair support

F. Brown, Oxford

At present I believe there is about 30 per cent support in the population for the miners. If a reasonable fraction of this number were willing to, say, double their electrical consumption between the hours of 5pm and 7pm by switching on one ring of a cooker or a one bar electric fire then dramatic effects would ensue for the cost of only 10p per day per person.

- The average demand for power at the moment is met mainly from fuel which is other than coal, but this is not sufficient during peak periods, forcing its limited use during these times, thus the high demand in the peak period forces a much greater use of coal.
- Once more coal power stations are fired they cannot be as easily damped down as other types of power station, forcing a further use of coal.
- The regions of maximum support for the miners also happen to be in areas where there are the most coal-fired power stations and some 30 per cent of electricity would be lost in transferring power from non-coal burning power stations.

The effect of all this would probably be the doubling of coal consumption for a 10 per cent increase in electricity demand during peak periods. The likely response to such action is probably to instigate power cuts to try to conserve coal stocks but at least this would boost the morale of the miners and spur the government on to a possible rethink.

More than enlightened

Nick Billingham, Campaign for Homosexual Equality, London N1

I can't seriously quarrel with Andrew Lumsden's article on CHE's conference (*NS* 31 August) but I would like to try to explain one or two points that still might be unclear.

CHE's new and smaller membership reflects not so much a rejection of a mass movement as such, but rather a redefinition of our role. In the early '70s local CHE groups provided an environment in which people new to the gay world could form the contacts and gain the confidence to help them to live openly as gay people. That need still exists, but other groups can meet it as well as we could.

But we don't see ourselves as a small sect of the 'enlightened'. The gay movement, though now made up of a far more varied collection of organisations, is more cohesive through an increasingly sophisticated network of cross-membership and cross-affiliations. That makes it stronger and CHE welcomes the development — but we want new members too!

The other point concerns the current state of politics. CHE is firmly non-party political and we criticise the short-coming of Liberal Councils (eg Hereford's reaction to the publicity some months ago following the discovery of a lesbian couple on their housing list) as strongly as those of Labour or Conservative ones.

But that doesn't mean that we can't tell the difference between our friends and our enemies. Ken Livingstone has won an affection going far beyond mere admiration or gratitude and crossing traditional party boundaries. I think he has rediscovered that Victorian virtue which the Prime Minister so conspicuously omits from her list — the encouragement of civic initiative and enterprise to meet the ever-changing perceptions of the needs of local inhabitants.

VIEWPOINT

'After years of loyal service. . .'

WE ARE ASSEMBLED this evening, amid the plush luxury of a London 5 star, to honour the retirement of a Company Director, a man whose mediocrity nearly bankrupted the business. That he has held his exalted position for 15 years is a tribute to the gentlemanly ineptitude of British management.

He has been promoted, as the Peter Principle would have it, to his level of incompetence and, although his peers are aware of his shortcomings, there he has stayed, for this is one of those cosy British companies where the boardroom has the atmosphere of a club, and fitting in takes precedence over qualifications and even performance. Indeed, above a certain level, the former are quite an incumbrance as they make the management feel naked and exposed. This is still talented amateur land after all, even if the talent's rather thin.

So here he sits: over-promoted, over-paid and overdue for the boot, but tonight all is beaming benevolence and fond farewells.

Foreign partners have jetted in from Germany. No expense is spared, no praise too lavish. We are even attired in full evening dress for this auspicious occasion. Solid women in pearls and long pink dresses, portly men in dinner jackets, we face one another over the cocktails, muttering small talk of mutual disinterest.

The meal, served in the privacy of the Rose Room, is tepid and pretentious. It owes much to middle-class management's predilection for showing off acquired status (on expenses of course). Melon follows fish in thick sauce. Dry pheasant and, to follow, out of season strawberries. The Chairman, so it seems, has spent most of a morning selecting the menu, with a singular lack of success. It is revealing of their view of recessionary times that he has nothing better to do.

After the meal endless eulogies ensue. Only the making of mental rejoinders keeps me amused. 'We do hope that Jack will continue to give us some of his valuable time . . .' (preferably no more than 15 minutes a week), 'He's been with the Firm since '47' (and should have left in '48), 'This memorable meal . . .' (congealing on my plate).

Foreign partner announces ambiguously: 'Ve are so pleased to be here for Jack's retirement'. Beneath the benignity of his words does there lurk a steely glint, a hint of wonder that such lack of talent could be so well tolerated for so long? These foreigners are younger, sharper men whose rise owes more to merit than to length of service. They jar upon the Brits; 'He's not top drawer you know, *and* started in production' had been the Chairman's comment on their rising star. Production and Industrial Relations are where the lower social orders with their degrees from Salford go. They are not a route to the top. Old prejudices about the sons of gentlemen and dirty hands die hard. This starves the boardroom of much common sense and perpetuates the great divide between top management and a workforce they neither know nor understand.

Occasionally a forward-looking Chairman or MD recruits a brash young engineer or business grad. to find his co-Directors closing ranks. Only a strong patron and much personal creativity will put him on the Board. The talented high-fliers look outside the mainstream of British manufacturing for their careers, and with good reason.

In the Rose Room the celebrations continue. Jack's wife, much feted as the little woman who helped him reach the top (and indeed her back is permanently bent), graciously accepts her role in life and her bouquet of wilted gladdies. Jack is presented with the modern equivalent of the ubiquitous clock: a video recorder of outstanding excellence. They show a snatch of tape to demonstrate its quality: Songs of Praise from Pontefract, calculated to bring heart to a flagging party! Chief Teuton, not to be outdone, presents his personal gift — clumsy silver condiments. They are passed around with the port for all to admire their inelegance. 'Mein Frau has chosen them specially', he beams. Not without his cutting edge this man.

How envious we British are of their affluence, their obvious success. Our Executives visiting the US sometimes comment, it is said, on the pervasiveness of evaluating everything in money terms. This is taken as evidence of a slightly distasteful materialism. But the trappings of that materialism stir us to envy and they unwittingly fuel the fire: 'Hav you been to Mexico? Ve hav just had one months holiday there', and then 'Tomorrow ve vill shop at Harrods'. They should say to us: 'Vhy don't you pursue excellence instead of preserving the social order if you vant more profits and less acrimony?'

Midnight, and time for the gathering to disperse before the bonhomie turns to bitterness and home truths are uttered. But lo, an announcement is made: Jack, it appears, is not to be lost to the Firm forever. He will serve as a non-executive Director. Doubtless this is construed as doing the decent thing, to reward all those years of loyal service. The news is greeted with faint clapping and his successor shifts uneasily in his chair. A man of some small vision, he had nurtured plans for innovation. The Germans look bemused. For shortsighted gentility we British take the biscuit. With each portion of port and stilton three sour grapes were served. Was this a social comment?

Christina Loufte

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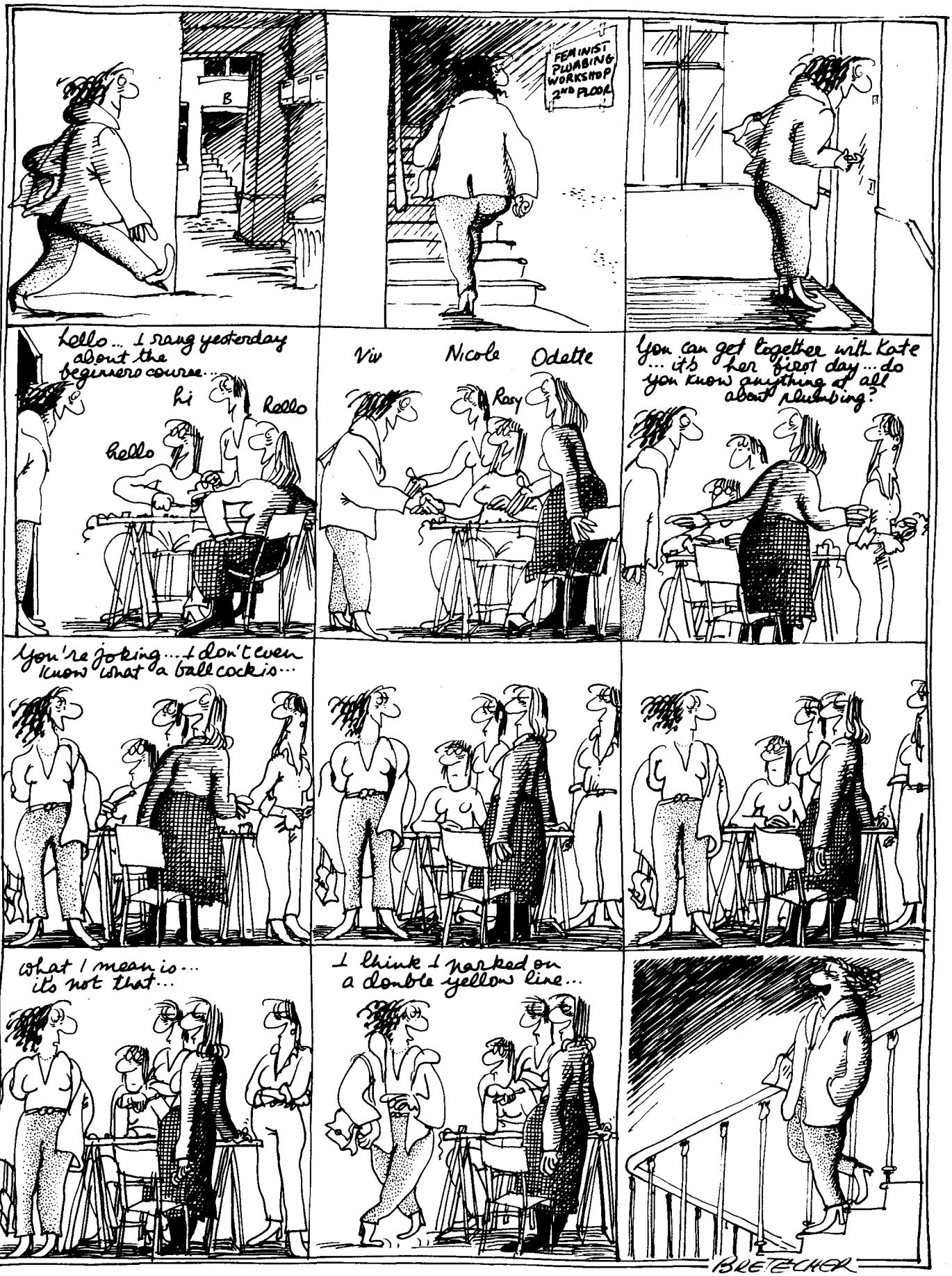
BRETECHER

PLUMBING THE DEPTHS


B
FEMINIST PLUMBING WORKSHOP 2ND FLOOR
Hello... I rang yesterday about the beginners course...
Hi
Hello
Hello
Viv
Nicole
Odette
Rosy
You can get together with Kate ... it's her first day... do you know anything at all about plumbing?
You're joking... I don't even know what a ball cock is...
What I mean is... it's not that...
I think I parked on a double yellow line...
BRETECHER

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An improbable revolutionary

On the eve of his nationwide speaking tour Dave Kitson talks to Denis Herbstein and Sarah Benton about his 20 years in a South African jail

Paul Mattsson

Dave Kitson with Norma Kitson on his arrival in Britain four months ago

DAVID KITSON, by his own admission, is not a poetic man. One of his fellow prisoners in the white political section of Pretoria Central Prison wrote a poem from the viewpoint of a small child. 'He had this polysyllabic flower in it and I wanted to know how a five-year-old could know a name like that. My criticism wasn't well received, especially as the fellow has since won a prize for his poetry.'

To the poet, this was no doubt a pedantic criticism. But no doubt Dave Kitson's refusal to let go his sense of reality, of scientific truth, helped him survive, seemingly unscathed, for 20 years. For Dave Kitson appears, at least on the outside, to be almost unchanged by an experience which many would imagine to be intolerable. He seems to bear no scars of bitterness, no halo as a martyr in the struggle (the prisons are anyway still full of enemies of the South African State; the treatment of black prisoners significantly worse than that of white.) To questions from strange interviewers on any prison experience of philosophical or emotional anxiety he offers laconic, dismissive answers. His voice is never anything but quiet and courteous.

It is the world outside the prison walls that has changed radically introducing, Kitson noted, gay and women's liberation movements, the development of Eurocommunism and a dramatic if cosmetic change in the number of black people visible in once white-only jobs. During that 20 years ('it seems a magical number' to other people, Kitson said wryly) his children, Stephen and Amandla, grew up and his wife, Norma divorced him and independently set up, in London, the typesetting business, Red Lion. Yet despite these transformations, Dave Kitson has quietly and happily rejoined his family. The only outward differences are the bars they have put up for his protection on the windows and Norma's appearance; she looks, overnight, 20 years younger.

DAVE KITSON was an improbable revolutionary 'terrorist'. He began in the late thirties as an engineering student in Durban. He was soon attracted to the Communist Party (SACP), the only organisation in the country which was colour-blind. He sold the party newspaper, *The Guardian*, read John Strachey's *Why I am a socialist*. He joined the South African army, with the dual intention of defeating Hitler and creating a better society back home on his return. The army taught him, as a sapper, how to make bombs.

In 1947 he came to London to further his studies. He stayed for 12 years, part of it as secretary of the Hornsey CP, and also got involved with the draughtsman's union, DATA (now TASS), which supported him throughout the years of imprisonment. He makes no great claims for his activity in the union or party. 'I didn't regard myself in any great light, I was just a rank and file member, doing my bit wherever it was.'

He met and married Norma, from a wealthy Durban family, had a child and then returned to South Africa in 1959 for no better reason, he claims, than to 'show the child off to its grandparents'. South Africa was in a ferment. The shooting of 69 unarmed blacks at Sharpeville was followed by the banning of the African National Congress and Pan-Africanist Congress (the SACP had gone underground after being outlawed in 1952). Kitson recalls the epoch: 'There were some months of discussion and we finally decided to set up Umkonto we Sizwe (Spear of the Nation), which would attack installations, but not people. There is a non-violent tradition in South Africa, Ghandi started his satyagraha there and Albert Luthuli, president of the ANC, won the Nobel peace prize.'

But Ghandi had been killed in 1948. By 1960, it was the Cuban revolution which had the freshest impact on revolutionary thought; that, and the still unsuccessful Algerian war of independence, marked the new era of armed national liberation struggle. 'We all read Che Guevara and other books on guerrilla war', says Kitson. How different this would be in South Africa, whose apparatus of State repression was already enormously stronger than Cuba's or most colonial

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countries, could not then be known.

Kitson was invited to join Umkonto, first serving on its technical advisory committee, using his wartime bomb expertise. He did not himself prime bombs, but taught others how to instruct in bomb-making after which they decided on the target. Next he moved to the logistics committee, which would need to supply the guerrillas if their campaign got going (it didn't — the Rivonia and other trials at this time shut most of the resistance leadership, including Nelson Mandela and Bram Fischer, in prison.) 'Our discussions got a little out of hand', Kitson recalls. 'At one time we suggested we needed 250,000 aspirins'. But despite his insistence on his modest technician's role, Kitson represented the SACP on the Umkonto National High Command.

Umkonto was active for about a year, blowing up a few installations, when Kitson was arrested in 1963. He had escaped for so long because, as a middle-aged man (he was 43) with a young family and a steady job as a mechanical engineer, he did not fit the image. When he was finally identified, 'I was a sitting duck'. They staked out his office and took him away.

He spent the next 131 days of his life in solitary confinement, with periods of intense interrogation, sometimes by 12 men at a time. Norma too was held for 21 days.

There are few on the Left who have not imagined how they would stand up to interrogation, wondering if they would 'crack' at the first threat of pain. Kitson was not subjected to intense physical torture. What, then, was the most intolerable form of 'interrogation'? 'Being kept without sleep' he says simply. There was already a literature of torture and interrogation; but they had not read it. They believed they must hold out and say nothing. Later they learned that 'with modern methods they are going to get something out of you sooner or later, so you proceed with a series of lies'. Kitson did begin to speak to his interrogators, but for the 131 days managed to hold back the crucial piece of information. They never found out he was a member of the high command. 'They thought I was one of those middle-class fuddies who get involved in things.'

He heard later that this failure to find out cost one man his promotion. They learned it from Lionel Gay, a fellow member of the high command who turned State witness. Kitson is coolly forgiving. 'Lots of people caved in. Everybody has his limit'. Gay's was that he was 'intimidated by the police threats that he was likely to be hanged and his wife had just had a baby'.

Kitson and four others were charged with sabotage and offences under the Supression of Communism Act. In December 1964, he was sentenced to 20 years hard labour. The four on trial with him, black and Indian, went to 'non-white' prisons. At the age of 44, Kitson found himself in the maximum security Pretoria Central Prison, where, together with upwards of 24 white male communists and liberals, he was to spend the middle years of his life.

BY ALL accounts Dave Kitson adapted well to the regime. When things really got rough, the discipline of his army training saw him through. He was polite to everybody. Once, soon after he was jailed, he happened to be standing glowering when the commanding officer walked past. 'He winked and came back and said "are you cross with me?". And I said no. And he said, "Well, good morning then." And so I said "good morning". After that I decided one might as well be polite. With a man that's being polite to you it's more difficult for him to shout at you. . .'

Here we get to the core of what allows many political prisoners to endure, sense of self intact, the confinement and conditions. For a start, the prison officers treat them differently, having to respond (it is still a relationship) to the courtesy and non-violence they are offered. The officers could relax with the politicals, says Kitson; 'they didn't have to watch their backs all the time'. The political prisoners are almost always better educated than most officers or offenders in prison. As long as they are there as a group, they can sustain a high level of morale and a strong collective identity and discipline; they are in prison for a cause. Within this group, Kitson identified himself as a hard-liner, the man least tolerant of 'liberal nonsense' and any softening accommodation with the system.

'I did feel they should get on with the bloody revolution and get us out. What were they up to?'

There was one exception, Raymond Thoms, one of a group of English-speaking students, mostly liberals, who were jailed in 1965 for a series of explosions. He was a talented man, well read in literature, a good musician. But he couldn't take prison. Then he gave evidence against a man called Jock Strachan, who had written a series of articles about prison conditions — which incidentally led to many prison reforms — and got him jailed. And after a year, Thoms was put back in the political prison. 'And so that poor chap lived through years in Coventry, not because we were being vindictive but you have to look after yourselves in jail and we knew from past experience that if we relented this chap would use our relations with him to serve his own needs'.

Their ability to create their own communal values is what Kitson stresses. But it should not be idealised. 'At first the screws gave us a hard time, they shouted at us and our life was regimented. We had some horrible people there. There was Du Preez, the perfect sadist, who never laid a finger on us but did his best to discommode us all the time. He was known throughout the prison system as "Kaffir" du Preez, which is the worst insult an Afrikaner can pay to a white man. We called him "aunty."'

South African prison treatment is divided into four grades, A, B, C, D. The entry grade for the worst criminals is C, with D treatment reserved as a punishment for prisoners who commit an offence. The politicals were placed automatically in D grade, virtually destitute of rights. Kitson, however, could write one letter every six months not exceeding 500 (censored) words, and receive one 500-word letter every six months. He was allowed one half-hour visit every six months. Conditions did improve after a few years. Repression had dampened down the opposition, police and prison officers relaxed. The politicals, who are allowed no remission, settled down to learn how to work the system.

'We learned the prison regulations and started to apply them. We would put in complaints about anybody whom we disapproved of, a written complaint which went to the CO. Every year the warder appears before the merit board to see if he would get promotion. If a man has a heap of complaints in his dossier, they say "look at all these complaints, what's wrong with you? You can't handle people, we're not going to promote you."' It didn't, of course, stop the sadists, they simply became more sophisticated.

THE improvement is seen vividly in the area of censorship, always a sensitive matter among educated prisoners. At first, no newspapers or magazines. Then controls were eased slightly. They began correspondence courses with the University of South Africa. Then economics students were allowed to read the Johannesburg *Financial Mail*. Then they won the privilege of buying magazines published in South Africa. Kitson found himself subscribing to *Vogue* and *Home and Garden*. Anything to make contact with the world outside.

Finally, the politicals took the Prisons department to court to press for more news and information. Though losing on a majority verdict, very soon censored South African Broadcasting Corporation news bulletins were relayed to them. And

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finally, in 1980, they were allowed newspapers and news magazines. In fact, South African prisoners have more rights in relation to their civil society than do British. This is because, says Kitson, international opinion looks at South African prisons as a measure of the state of civil liberties.

But it was through their degree courses that they got hold of the most unlikely books. 'If it wasn't written by Marx, then they didn't know it was no good. They don't react to names like Krautsky or Althusser or Perry Anderson.'

Kitson, somewhat surprisingly, was allowed to begin an arts degree in Russian and English, but at the end of the first year the Russian was stopped. He switched to politics and economics. They could not go higher than a first degree, so Kitson began a BSc in mathematics. For three years he was stopped from studying by the new minister, Jimmy Kruger, the 'butcher of Soweto', who complained that the prison was becoming a 'university for revolutionaries'.

It is a myth, invented by those of us who have never experienced prison life, that being cut off from the thousand and one idiotic distractions of everyday life will produce in us the depth and range of thought we cannot normally reach. Yet it is a rare person who can, without outside stimulus, produce wholly new desires or discoveries. There are famous examples of men who, in the seclusion of prison life, produce their most famous works. But they, from Antonio Gramsci to the Marquis de Sade, tend to pursue what they were interested in when they were free. Men and women imprisoned for IRA activities emerge with beliefs intact, as though the experience has pickled and hardened their thoughts.

During his 20 years, Dave Kitson cherished and deepened his existing interests in politics and science. He felt, he says, no need for creative self-expression, preferring to solve problems on his Packard calculator. He did not like 'the classics' though he once read *Barnaby Rudge* twice in one week 'when there was nothing else to read' and did enjoy Dickens. When he had done his degrees, he studied Zulu and statistics for pleasure. But he did need fantasy, returning to a childhood love of sea adventures and a continuous fascination with science fiction. In all, he read about 300 books a year.

THEY WERE not, by the end of his sentence, suffering exceptional physical discomfort (though Kitson points out, with some acerbity, how cold the Pretoria winter is). But they were white men in a prison society where apartheid is as fundamental as in the society outside. Kitson is highly conscious of the relative privileges the white prisoners enjoyed; they did not labour in lime quarries, but sewed mailbags (until mechanisation replaced them) and learned joinery to equip government offices and, for some, to make ammunition boxes for the South African war effort.

Fifteen years into his sentence, three of his colleagues escaped. The rest were moved to the nearby prison for condemned men, where South Africa's scores of annual hangings take place, while security was improved. It was called Beverley Hills, after a plush Durban hotel. When they returned, in November 1982, they had better beds and furniture, hot and cold water, flush toilets in the 12 ft by 9 ft cells, and fluorescent lighting on from 6am to 11pm. There was a big dining room and games room downstairs. The only complaint was that there were now four small yards where before there had been a big one. 'You ran round it 20 times and that was a kilometre,' Kitson recalls.

'I didn't feel remorse. I don't feel guilty. I thought I waged a just and necessary struggle.'

If they were cut off from the experience of change, they were avid for news of all change, from politics to fashion. They read and talked about politics, able to read of developments because of the ignorance of the censor, though Kitson the hard-liner has little time for Eurocommunism or Soviet dissidents. The Soviet Union was right to go into Afghanistan he says confidently, though is less sure about Czechoslovakia in 1968. But as the years of his enforced, isolated passivity dragged on: 'I did feel they should get on with bloody revolution and get us out. What were they up to?' New prisoners arrived and reported on what was happening, and he was not always patient with their views. 'Some fellows were sycophantic to our leaders, but I was rather critical. I knew Joe Slovo (of the SACP) when I was a student and it's difficult to be obsequious'.

And physically, emotionally, how did they deal with deprivation? They were able to buy food. A craze for smoked mussels lasted for some time. When they complained that prison coffee was too watery, they were allowed to make their own. For friendship they turned to each other, though Kitson says he had no specially close friends. He is unfazed by questions on homosexuality, but says firmly it did not occur in his group 'because we all had political attitudes.'

Sometimes prisoners fell in love with the female prison visitors. 'I was always interested in their fashions and made them turn round' (he gestures a swinging skirt). But being deprived of sex itself was not, according to Kitson, a great problem. 'We were sophisticated people and we'd read Brigid Brophy.' We missed the reference. 'Brigid Brophy on the desirability of masturbation which solves a lot of problems.'

Towards the end his term, it was clear that white attitudes were changing. By now many young Afrikaners had discovered they could avoid military service by becoming warders, and be highly paid for it. Kitson: 'There was a flood of young men who didn't give a damn. We used to make tea for them and share our food. Sometimes, after a wild night out, one of them would stagger into jail, open an empty cell and sleep all day and we'd have to wake him up.'

The day before his release, Rip van Winkle Kitson went shopping for clothes, accompanied by two warders. He found black shop assistants, black traffic police, and they were all treated politely. 'I know a lot of dreadful things go on out of sight, in Soweto and bantustans, but I was surprised at the courteous way my warders treated them.'

KITSON came out just in time to see his father Frederick who died in Johannesburg soon after. Old Mr Kitson's British nationality (he was born in Islington) gave Kitson the right to live in Britain. He hadn't seen Norma for 12 years, as she had been refused a visa by Pretoria. 'I was a bit apprehensive, he says mildly, 'but we have hit it off very well'. He has not been put out to grass: 'I envisaged when I came out I'd be an old fuddy and would trot round and meet all my old friends from 30 years ago. But I've been dragged along by the militant activists of my family and by the intense interest in my release'. (He is a little embarrassed by this; no other freed prisoner so far has had his reception.)

This month, after a holiday with Norma in Moscow and on the Black Sea, Kitson starts his lecture tour of Britain, sponsored by his Union TASS, the ANC and SATIS (South Africa the Imprisoned Society). After this he will lecture in mathematical statistics at Ruskin, his old Oxford College.

Dave Kitson has no sense of being a martyr. 'When I got to jail, I just regarded myself as a casualty of the conflict. It had to happen to some people and it just happened to be me. Some people were killed, so I'm glad I'm not one of those. My lawyer thought I was going to be hanged, and it turned out I only got 20 years. I didn't feel remorse, I don't feel guilty. I thought I waged a just and necessary struggle. There is one thing I do regret. I missed watching my children grow up.' □

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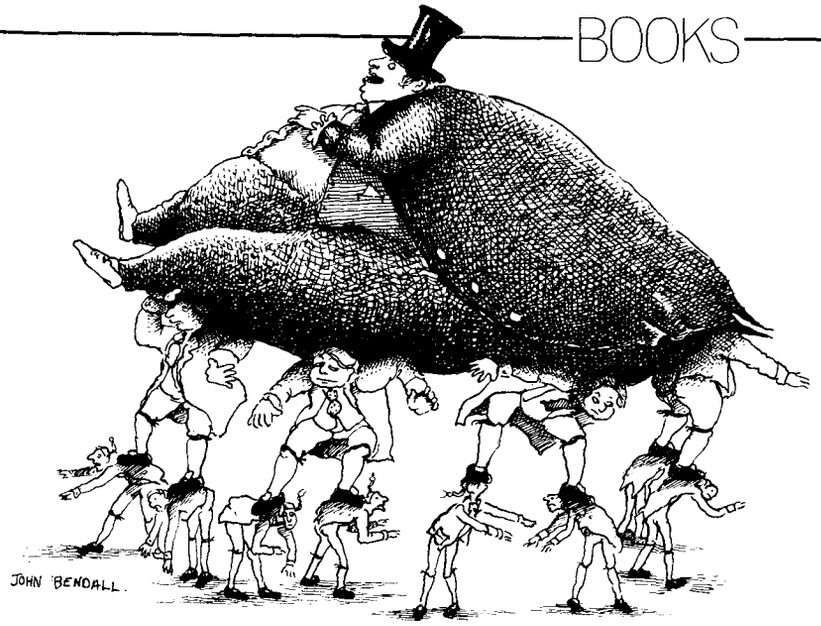

John Bendall

Them

Jeremy Black

An Open Elite? England 1540-1880
LAWRENCE STONE and JEANNE C. FAWTIER STONE *Oxford* £24

IN THIS significant, interesting and well-written work the Stones use a computer to demolish one of the most influential and hitherto untested myths in English social history, namely that England has long been an open élite. It has been received wisdom that a crucial factor distinguishing English society from that of the rest of Europe for at least four centuries has been the easy access of self-made men to power and status: the harmonious intermingling with the landed interest of families made wealthy through office, the professions, trade and industry.

This portrayal of social mobility lubricated by wealth and aristocratic acceptance has served historians of various ideological persuasions rather like the concept of the role of public opinion: it can be used as an explanatory device to fill numerous gaps in historical comprehension. In particular, the concept of the open élite has been used to help explain both the agricultural and the industrial revolutions, the creation of a stable, yet flexible, political system and Britain's economic decline. Of late the *Economist* has added to its criticism of supposedly conservative trade unions the suggestion derived from M.J. Wiener's *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit*, that the cultural assimilation of successful entrepreneurs into the landed élite led to a diminished stress of profit and enterprise.

The Stones' examination of the thesis of the open society is based on an impressive body of evidence. Jeanne Stone has worked wonders in utilising the computer and Lawrence Stone, never an official historian of the received idea, has written a stimulating book. The computer analysis of large-scale land-holdings and country houses, described aptly in 1789 as 'mausoleums of vanity', investigates changes in three counties: one, Hertfordshire, under strong metropolitan influence, another, Northumberland, distant from London, and a third, Northamptonshire, 'a hidebound, dull, inward-turned, and stuffy society, obsessed with horses, dogs, and hunting' and little affected in this period by industry. The decision to exclude Scotland, Ireland and Wales is an unfortunate one, as it would have been interesting to compare English conditions with those elsewhere.

In both land and seats an extraordinary continuity in possession is revealed and relatively little social mobility. There were few new men in the countryside and they were mostly professionals and office-holders rather than merchants, bankers and industrialists: 'The unity of English élite society was a unity of the land and the professions, only marginally of the land and business, and not at all of land and industry.' The Stones suggest that it was not social mobility that made England exceptional 'but the ease of cultural assimilation of the children of those relatively few who made the move into a higher social sphere'.

Mathematical precision, buttressed by an impressive and well-produced array of graphs and tables, is accompanied by Lawrence Stone's fluent, fertile and suggestive prose. Much of the book throws light on the social history of England, and some of the arguments, such as that on the élite's 18th-century withdrawal from and 19th-century partial return to the duties and responsibilities of local governance, are of considerable importance.

However, it is only fair to point out that many of the bold ideas Lawrence Stone advanced in earlier works, such as *The Causes of the English Revolution*, have met subsequently with sustained criticism. Stone attacks both the neo-marxist and the liberal-democratic paradigms about the evolution of English élite society in the 18th and 19th centuries and is particularly critical of E.P. Thompson. Confidence in his approach is not improved by the self-evident nature of many of his statements:

> Surrender is difficult for those who are convinced that they are the natural rulers of society. Paternalism may be a false consciousness which conceals from those who practise it an egotistical determination to rule, but it is a powerful historical force to be reckoned with, which normally affects inferiors as well as superiors.

Furthermore, reading the work a second time one cannot help feeling that somehow the precision and accuracy of the mathematical analysis is not matched in the non-mathematical sections. The discussion of élite ethos and of attitudes to paternalism is an unconvincing one based on a limited number of sources. Similarly the discussion of 'Cultural Cohesion with the Middling Sort', a very important topic, is weak. If it is true that 'the great strength of the English landed élite was its success in psychologically coopting those below them into the status hierarchy of gentility' then Stone's inadequate discussion of this feature can only irritate. Many will wish that much of the space devoted to the country house had instead been used to discuss some of the provocative, fascinating and ultimately unrealised suggestions with which the book is speckled. Having concentrated on the élite, Stone finds it difficult to give sufficient weight to the capacity for autonomous thought and action of other sections of rural society.

At £24 for 566 pages this book is inexpensive by the standards of the Oxford University Press. Libraries and potential readers would be best advised, however, to wait until it has been paperbacked, as Lawrence Stone's other books have been. □

Seeing red

John Rentoul

Sparks Fly! A Trade Union Life
FRANK CHAPPLE *Michael Joseph* £10.95

A FEW MONTHS before the outbreak of the Second World War, when he was 17, Frank Chapple joined the Communist Party. 'As with so many young people of that era, events and environment combined to place me on the political left,' he says. 'The threat of a new world war, fascism, poverty and unemployment had to be fought.'

Nineteen years later, in 1958, those threats had perhaps receded; Chapple, now on the executive of the electricians' union, left the Communist Party and began a bitter struggle to wrest from it control of the union.

A further 26 years on and the threats of world war, poverty, unemployment, even fascism, have come full cycle. This time, though, events and environment have combined to place Chapple, general secretary since 1966 of what is now called the EETPU, on the political right of the labour movement.

Chapple bashing was a popular sport on the Left between 1961, when he and Les Cannon defeated the Communists by taking them to the High Court for ballot-rigging, and 9 June 1983. Before the 1983 general election, the fact that the sole acknowledgement at the front of Chapple's autobiography is to John Grant, the former SDP MP, would have blinded many Labour supporters to his argument. Now, they may read his blunt, no-nonsense prose in a new light. *Sparks Fly!* is a vigorous defence of 'business unionism' and of collaboration with

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the State and with capital. But, as Chapple gets closer to the present, particularly where he describes the miners' strike as a 'calamitous period in which working people and their families have been shamefully betrayed', the doubts creep back in.

The key to 'understanding Frank' is the third of his life that he spent in the Communist Party, only to end up fighting against it. The thread that runs through his subsequent political career is a poisonous hatred of Communism. And 'Communism', for Chapple, has matured over the years to stand for all his political opponents on the Left. The left wing of the TUC General Council is referred to as the 'pro-Soviet group' and its reluctance to condemn the shooting down of the Korean airliner at the start of last year's Congress was like five drops of Baby Bio to Chapple's Manichean view of the world.

But it isn't just in his virulent anti-Communism that Chapple is a throwback to the 1950s. He is anti-green (a whole chapter devoted to 'nuclear matters'), anti-feminist (a paragraph devoted to the 'tart and prissy' Anna Coote) and anti-gay (quoting his successor Eric Hammond's attack on the GLC for backing 'terrorist groupies, lesbians and other queer people', Uncle Frank cuffs his protégé approvingly: 'If he wanted to prove that the electricians won't go soft without me, he did it. The language was unduly rosy and earned him a rebuke from Len Murray, but the sentiments were justified').

But when Chapple claims that the 'ordinary members' of his union — 'and other unions too' — are behind him, this is not just defensive hyperbole. Chapple has always been elected to lead the union with large majorities and Hammond was chosen as his successor by an equally convincing margin. The now familiar statistic of the 1983 general election — the mere 39 per cent of trade union members who voted Labour — means that the Labour Party has to come to terms with Chappleism rather than simply returning Chapple's colourful abuse — which is directed as much at the 'spineless' Right as at the 'Communist' Left. □

Richard Willson

Fly in Farol

Bill Greenwell

Voices of the Old Sea
NORMAN LEWIS *Hamish Hamilton* £8.95

VOICES OF THE OLD SEA is a record of three successive summers in the late Forties, when Lewis became a sort of honorary member of Farol, a small fishing community in Catalonia. By the third summer, the 20th century has infiltrated its isolated, almost secret existence, and its secluded culture has been fatally contaminated. Harvests of sardine and tunny have dwindled; the first shoal of tourists has arrived.

Lewis's distaste for the newcomers, for the intrusion, is plain; but it never obtrudes. He sets instead about the task of reviving in print a baffling, farcical and remarkable world on the brink of its disappearance. And yet he does so without a trace of bafflement himself. He is the most invisible of presences and one reels at the very fact of his tactful involvement with Farol. In the process, he lets the hapless fishermen dignify themselves and the superstitious oddity of their vanishing traditions.

By any objective standards, the village and the villagers would enrich a comic novel. Farol itself is unrelentingly pagan, although there is a local priest who occupies himself with some distant amateur archaeology. The place is overrun by starving cats, generously tolerated, never fed. The nearby village of Sort, with which there are obsessional, often nonsensical feuds, is overrun in similar fashion by starving dogs. Sort, however, *is* religious, and has a shrine with which a desultory fiesta is associated. The men and women tramp in opposite directions, 12 times round the field in which the shrine sits. Then they eat their sandwiches. Farol's fiesta is just as ritualistically pointless, and yet here we have a village where, amazingly, the fishermen discuss their prospects in blank verse — indeed, in Castilian, its cadences being more highly esteemed.

Lewis's absolute refusal, however, to bat more than the occasional and very surreptitious eyelid at Farol renders the ridiculous poignant, the bizarre logical and the battle with an unyielding sea mildly heroic. When the tourists come and are, by poor planning, given rooms overlooking the hut of the horse castrator, it is the foreigners who seem ludicrous.

And this Lewis, with his unflurried sequences of observation, intends. In *Golden Earth* (1952), he praises those Victorian missionaries whose writings, despite much blinkered biblical tub-thumping, record very scrupulously what they see:

> . . .the main thing is that, whether they disapprove or not, they write it all down. . .how much more one can learn from them than from so many modern collections of impressions, with their amused tolerance, their tepid, well-mannered sympathy.

Lewis still lives up to his own high standards. His is a subtle, exacting art, controlling the finest of descriptive sentences — 'The morning had fallen to a flat calm, full of marine herb scents and the flinty twitterings of finches' — but subjugating them to the more pressing task of reporting what is said and done.

Travel writing today has learned much of its craft from this wonderful writer. Latterly, it has begun to become a sub-genre of autobiography, which is not to sound a note of regret, since the younger writers have retained and refine that intense concern with recording experience, rather than patronising it. They also maintain his intense concern for style. *Voices of the Old Sea*, meanwhile, is a melancholy, inspired testament to those vigorous cultures encroached upon by the deadening — Lewis's word — effects of the new. It is also a tribute to a writer's total empathy with his subject, and I cannot recommend it warmly enough. □

FICTION — 1

No escape

John Clute

The Laughter of Carthage
MICHAEL MOORCOCK *Secker* £9.95

MICHAEL MOORCOCK is 44. *The Laughter of Carthage* is his 55th novel, give or take a few. It has been a long career for a young man and, by the evidence of this book, it is a career, after a quarter of a century, that is only now attaining its full momentum. As a tour de force and as a portrait of the century, *Carthage*, along with its intimate predecessor *Byzantium Endures* (1981; soon to be reissued), sums up that career and may mark a boundary beyond which the novel as a form cannot safely — or sanely — go.

In science fiction circles, there has been a storyline about the life and works of Michael Moorcock. It has the virtue of simplicity. Fresh from the pits of *Tarzan Adventures* and the Sexton Blake Library, so the story goes, young Moorcock sprang around 1962 into the larger world of science fantasy as a kind of idiot savant. His relentlessly pliant ability to churn out dozens of myth-soaked novels — most notably the Elric tales — had little or nothing to do with the conscious premeditations of slower, more visibly crafty writers. In 1965, by some labile magic, he managed to create an icon for the Sixties in Jerry Cornelius, shape-changer, fetish-monger, murderous city-dweller, Bond and Pierrot irretrievably mixed. At the same time, through his mysteriously sagacious editing of *New Worlds*, he and his contributors opened genre fiction to the harsh, liberating air of Modernism.

By the end of the Sixties, so the story goes on, Moorcock began to retreat from the delirium of the good days and to produce, out of some dark abyss in his convivial innocent self, those problematical moral fictions about the nature of the catastrophe — the catastrophe being in short the history of the modern world — through which dance, like the masked players in a harlequinade, like dervishes, all the characters of the earlier books, taking up postures,

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quickchanging identities and deaths, telling us the bad news.

In novels like *The English Assassin, Dancers at the End of Time* and *The Condition of Muzak*, which won the Guardian Fiction Prize in 1977, Moorcock, so the story ends, bootstrapped himself into a formidable respectability, no longer an idiot savant; something of a magus, rather, whose authority extends across the intricate fault lines marrying popular culture to the outside world whose catastrophe we inhabit.

The story is not all balderdash. Much of the early work is junk; the later work feeds off the earlier in ways difficult to analyse, though sometimes embarrassing to have to note. But this version of Moorcock's quite extraordinary career does fail to emphasise the fact that, from the very first, with conscious cunning and craft, he has put together a body of work the interconnections of which are primarily matters not of circumstance but metaphysics. At the maelstrom heart of his work lies a beguilingly slippery Pop Platonism, a constant shimmy of levels of reality, so that what is real in one book will seem only a parodic shadow of the real world as uncovered in the next book; and the book after that will introduce a yet higher and more real haven, in which, for a little while, there may be some peace between the wars.

But not for long. We come to *Byzantium Endures* and *The Laughter of Carthage*, in which all the Platonic cardsharping of Moorcock's entire career comes home to roost in this our own world, and there is no escape. In the Cornelius books, Colonel Pyat may have danced with the best of them; here, he is Maxim Arturovitch Pyatnitski, and the dance among realities of the earlier books becomes something far more punishing than one could have guessed, because Pyatnitski, who tells his own story, is perhaps the most appallingly unreliable narrator ever presented in a work of fiction of any stature. But no matter what he says, the world does not shift. He remains caught red-handed in the holocaust of this century. The effect is terrifying.

It is all the more terrifying when we begin to realise, through the 600 pages of *The Laughter of Carthage*, that Moorcock has created in the hysterical foetor of Pyatnitski's self-serving personality a model of moral and cultural bankruptcy that can serve as a paradigm of the failure of Western civilization itself. The previous volume tells of his birth in 1900 of Jewish blood; of the education whose tenets he despoils; of the family and friends whom he betrays again and again; of his enormous greed for money, prestige, sex, drugs, food; and of his entering a panicked adolescence in the midst of the Russian Revolution. The new volume carries him to Constantinople, Rome, Paris and, finally, America. He has not changed. He remains an anti-Semite, a liar, a thief, a monster of greed, a ruthless manipulator of those weaker than he; and all the while denies any complicity in the 'nightmare' he constantly attempts to escape but which is nothing more, or less, than his own loathsome slippery self.

Strangely, he is also an innocent. Totally humourless, he is incapable of detecting the scams or impostures of anyone else. There are moments of high comedy in Paris and, later, in Memphis Tennessee, when he becomes unwittingly involved in the confidence games of others. At points he bears an uncanny resemblance to the Pooter of the Grossmiths' *Diary of a Nobody* or, more precisely, to the husband in Barry Pain's Eliza books, for Moorcock's impersonation of Pyatnitski has something of the manic, imageless, hysterical drive of Barry Pain at his best.

Because we never escape Pyatnitski's voice, *The Laughter of Carthage* is at points almost unendurable. But the sustained brilliance of the telling pulls us back. Though there are moments when the story merely repeats itself, the underlying moral grasp never seriously falters. In Pyatnitski's manic elatedness at moments of triumph or travel, we can see something of the insensate momentum of the technologies we inherit; and in his frantic hatred for everything that makes him what he is, we may see something of our own losses. There are two volumes to follow. The climax will be in Auschwitz. □

Preparing the way

Michael Hofmann

In your impatience, you would bump-start the gates
when you came home. You did it almost tenderly,
but they rebounded off the gate-posts, flew in your face —
unless I was on hand to hold them open for you.

— You read like a wild man in my account,
but you were never that. Your temper hurts you
as much as us. Adversity tires you out.
We try to please you, keep things smooth for you.

When your feet went through the snow-crust,
I leaped off the path and ploughed into the drifts . . .
I was alone when I heard of my rejection from Clare.
It was the past that had got up to hit me, a past

I thought I'd finished with, school, housemaster, England.
Copper coins sank through my stomach.
I waited outside, the janitor of my own misfortune.
At least there was one rebuff I could spare you.

FICTION — 2

Fine disorder

Angela McRobbie

Three Novellas
LEO TOLSTOY *Quartet* £7.95
The Only Problem
MURIEL SPARK *Bodley Head* £7.95
Hotel du Lac
ANITA BROOKNER *Cape* £7.95

THIS MONTH'S NOVELS are as disparate a set as one might possibly imagine. They offer endless opportunities for speculating on the nature of novel writing, as well as on associated practices. And these stretch from reading and consuming to reviewing to literary criticism and to the creation of popular taste. All of these eventually find a place in the culture industry where fine distinctions are made.

Apart from the taking on of an identifiable literary tone, review-page novels nowadays seem easiest to define in terms of what they are not. They tend not to be crime or detective stories nor are they science fiction, pulp romance or pornography. In other words, they are not part of the paraphernalia of mass culture. I'm not a great fan of any of these particular genres but it does seem that they often offer more surprising possibilities. Without the tyranny of splendid characters (lovable or loathsome), this kind of fiction can create twilight moralities, unexpected deviant desires and an appetite whetted for more.

Nothing could be further from this than the first volume I have in front of me. It includes three modest and newly translated novellas written by Tolstoy in the earlier part of his career. They make for stunning reading. Their effortlessly realist style produces something like an autobiographical account cast within the recognisable confines of fiction. With disarming ease Tolstoy makes this formal strategy connect with a set of themes which have been primary in the organisation of modern life from the late 18th century onwards: the problem of order, the problem of marriage and the question of sexual desire.

In *A Landowner's Morning* a young aristocrat abandons an academic career to devote himself to improving the quality of his peasants' lives. His morning round is rather like a social worker's case load. Inevitably the poverty and hardship make him think in terms of solutions and greater social justice so that his dependents might lead more orderly lives. In these encounters a rich and anticipatory moment in the annals of social history is carved out. There cannot be a workable solution to the problems posed by a peasantry offered from above.

Family Happiness is an ironic title. It deals not so much with desire as with sexual propriety. Taking on the literary transvestism of the 19th century, Tolstoy speaks through the voice of a restless adolescent girl whose innocence and purity capture the attention of a much older family acquaintance. He sets out to win her

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Shorter reviews

At the Bottom of the River
JAMAICA KINCAID *Picador* £6.50

This is not a story. There is no linear progression, no neat plot. *At the Bottom of the River* is instead a beautiful chaos of images, murky and tactile, which hint at the dreams and nightmares involved as a girl shakes off her childhood.

Jamaica Kincaid's first book is irritatingly difficult to read unless you let yourself go. The author has stepped boldly into dangerous territory — that of the subconscious — and demands that you go along with her, making no concessions as to ease of expression or understanding. Sometimes this works and sometimes it does not. But her unusual style is a welcome experiment in the world of novel writing.

The book's first passage, 'Girl', is an amusing litany of do's and don'ts, delivered to the young West Indian by her mother: 'always eat your food in such a way that it won't turn someone else's stomach . . . don't pick people's flowers — you might catch something. . .'.

Later on, the mood plunges us much deeper. Her mother appears again, this time as a primeval, all-embracing creature from which her growing daughter needs to break free: a lizard with blazing eyes and long white throat, down on the seabed, under the 'silvery blue of the sea'. No perverse Freudian blame is intended here, but a sensitive awareness of the ancient, pre-human connection between parent and offspring.

Jamaica Kincaid can seem pretentious. She repeats words and phrases in biblical monotone, and sometimes her vibrant inner landscapes are too elusive — or exclusive — for me to grasp. But then she comes back, to express something fundamental about the way we live.

Her description of a man who is lost in a 'world bereft of its very nature', unaware of his connection to 'the above' and 'the below', subtly explains an alienation many of us suffer in modern society. This is not a book for pedants or rationalists. It's not even a book to read straight through. But if you can bear to dig deep, Jamaica Kincaid's writing may unlock a piece of yourself you did not even know existed. Highly unfashionable, perhaps, but fascinating.

Barney Bardsley

Man and Mouse
WILLIAM PATON *Oxford* £9.95 & £2.95
Men and Beasts
MAUREEN DUFFY *Paladin* £1.95

It was time that we heard from the other side: that on which humanity's dominion over fish, fowl, cattle and everything that creepeth is still accepted as one of our god-given perks. It is, after all (despite the growth of the Animal Rights opposition), by far the larger, more powerful and established team.

Which is, of course, why it hasn't needed to say much — and why it is especially intriguing that William Paton, a professor 'with more than forty years' experience in medical research', has now decided to put the case for experiments on non-human animals. While it's true that he may have been goaded to it by all the pictorial and verbal exposés of his craft, it's equally true that those who dislike it are often confused and uncertain.

Paton is quick to exploit this, rolling out all those benefits (the virtual disappearance of poliomyelitis, the total disappearance of smallpox, etc) to which experiments on non-human animals contributed. But, since he doesn't often explain precisely *how* they contributed, a credibility gap appears, through which we can see his lack of interest in the development (for example) of tissue cultures; his deafening silence on Thalidomide (judged safe after being tested on non-human animals); his faith in the scientists' will to police their own ethical conduct; in short, his torpid, motiveless, self-satisfied imagination.

My prejudice must be obvious; but, before I read this book, I *did* have qualms about arguing against experiments on animals. Those have been considerably reduced.

Paton uses graphs as backup. Maureen Duffy uses her poetry. Whatever this means, it isn't that hers is the more sentimental text: both she and Paton are quite agreed that animals seem capable of suffering, but it is *he* who has the vague 'oh dear what a shame' response, while Duffy lands herself fairly and squarely on a theory of animals' rights. Then, from that firm foundation, spreads her mind to consider the most pragmatic personal and public tactics (discussing not only vivisection, but farming, hunting, the wild, the home) by which those rights can be achieved.

Some will consider her approach too reformist. Others will balk at the handbook's title — which is, I agree, a disappointment. But to those who assume that they already know the argument and either are, or never will be, convinced, I can only say that you've rarely read it so lucidly, intelligently put.

Harriett Gilbert

The Truth of War: Owen, Blunden and Rosenberg
DESMOND GRAHAM *Carcanet* £12.95

Most readers of First World War poetry possess some knowledge of the circumstances which produced it. For Desmond Graham, this little knowledge can be a dangerous thing, resulting in 'assumptions and fixed ideas' that impede an open-minded and attentive approach to the genre. Consequently, he displays a style of close reading somewhat reminiscent of the New Critics. It would, of course, be wrong to imagine that Owen, Blunden and Rosenberg have never been accorded similar treatment before. Even so, in a number of cases, Graham does find richer depths that other eyes have overlooked.

Unfortunately, though, Graham stops short of providing anything like full-scale commentaries, tending to use the poems to illustrate his recurrent preoccupations: the poets' attitudes to their audiences; the question of authorial distance; and, above all, the way war 'transforms language'. While Graham makes some cogent points on these topics, it does mean that the book — a comparatively short one — gives an impression of sketchiness.

David Montrose

Talking to Myself
ANNA RAEBURN *Elm Tree Books* £8.95

Anna Raeburn is fortunate in having apparently escaped the worst excesses of parental flaws and foibles. Indeed, she has been blessed with paragons of parents — or so it seems from her own, very personal version of events. She has clearly never had occasion to blush at their lack of perceptiveness, to cringe at any embarrassing if well-meaning remark or to clash deeply with either of them on any major issue. The hang-ups which are frequently the legacy of nuclear family life are here, miraculously, absent.

Ms Raeburn's relationship with both her mother and late father is defined by mutual understanding, pride and respect. They were all jolly good chums, on the same wavelength. Neither parent *judged* or patronised. Ms Raeburn, quick to acknowledge their merits, says, 'If I'd gone shopping for parents I don't think I could have done much better than mine'.

This revelation stands like a rock in a sea of diverse and colourful experiences: her first, harrowing trip to America, two abortions, various love affairs, a broken marriage, the pressures and pleasures of media success (from *Forum* to *Woman* to *Cosmopolitan* and TV scriptwriting), late motherhood.

I found parts of the book compulsive reading, especially the chapters on her visits to the US, first as an over-exploited au pair and latterly for *Forum* magazine. But, for a woman who helped to revolutionise the Problem Page (and, hence, the agony aunt image), the style is too cloyingly sentimental, almost smug at times.

We discover that beneath the brittle confidence which is Ms Raeburn's public persona lies a vulnerable human being. Despite the self-consciously confessional tone, however, are we any nearer to pinpointing the *real* Anna Raeburn?

Veronica Groocock

Late Night Thoughts
LEWIS THOMAS *Oxford* £9.95

Lewis Thomas is in despair. He can no longer discover in Mahler's 9th Symphony a quiet celebration of his own death. Now when he hears it his mind swarms with images of a thermo-nuclear Armageddon. If he were young he thinks he might go crazy at the prospect, not only of the destruction of our species but of the squirrel and the chestnut tree. And this the author of *The Youngest Science* who thinks that ALL changes are for the better, and that science is the only game in town, and that scientists, not the least of whose achievements have been to make a present of the Bomb, are the only players.

To those of us who have long suspected that scientific curiosity will end up by killing that cat this is all very confusing. But then this thoughtful and elegant collection of essays is full of such contradictions. While deploring the tendency of literary analysis to eradicate mystery Dr Thomas would like to see something done to investigate the mystery of music. While exhorting social scientists to make their discipline as hard as quantum physics, he urges psychiatrists to encourage their patients to SUPPRESS two thoughts a day. While advising Governments not to think of excluding ANY field of endeavour from their research programmes he considers, as many of us have considered since 1945, that ALL research into nuclear weapons should be stopped forthwith (on the slimmish grounds that such researchers are not scientists but technicians).

Despite some rather naive suggestions for the prevention of the holocaust *Late Night Thoughts* should be required reading for all our Lords and Masters (of whom the author has a pretty low opinion) if only for its exposition of the great contemporary paradox. The belief on the one hand that nuclear weapons are essential for our survival and on the other the certainty that they won't be 'Let fly'.

Bruce Hepburn

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heart in a self-deprecating kind of way; his kindness and his modesty lead to the altar. Not surprisingly, she is aroused and disturbed by new emotions but marriage throws them into disarray and despair as pleasure turns to pain. Predictably enough, he becomes insufferably arrogant and distrustful; she is bewildered then flattered by the attention of others and finally reconciled to the state of marriage.

Finally, in *The Devil*, female sexuality is put on the line as a destructive force, something which can wreck stability and ruin the lives of men especially when it explodes between an honest master and a vibrant peasant girl. Desire is expressed in the language of temptation and, when guilt rears its head, it becomes a question of her death or his suicide.

Taken together these stories, despite their familiar narratives, are iconographic histories of disorder and desire. And quite independent of how they fit into the canons of world literature, they should be read by all social science as well as arts students.

Muriel Spark's **The Only Problem** is a perfect example of standard English novel-writing today. It's rather slight, quirky and clever in exactly the way one might imagine. Which is to say that the author's reputation colours at least partly how we come to her latest work. It is set within a recognisably Sixties crowd who have plenty of money and sufficient eccentricities to keep the narrative running. Harvey Gotham is a wealthy liberal type who exiles himself in France to devote his life to the study of the *Book of Job* and the theological problems raised by that volume. His glamorous ex-wife has taken up with a group of Left terrorists while he and her sister are left holding her baby. Not his. There is an actor who is also an ex-vicar in the background, as well as a young male student. Most of the action is referred back to Job and his suffering but for me by far the most interesting strand is Spark's account of the fascination those within the law, police and ex-husbands alike, have with those who have defiantly broken with the constraints of bourgeois society, especially when they are young, blonde and well-educated. 'The thought that Effie was a member of a terrorist band now excited Harvey sexually.' Somebody should write a book on the fantasy of terrorism in popular imagination.

Finally Anita Brookner's second novel in 18 months falls into even more familiar literary territory. As in her earlier *Look at Me*, Brookner focuses on the vulnerability and fragility of a stratum of London literary 'ladies', too genteel for feminism and too stuck within a sensibility which sees men, marriage and conventional sexuality as ultimately desirable to make any move to break with the pattern. Even when it well-nigh breaks them. The main character here is recovering from an adulterous affair by taking a holiday where she picks up with an equally lost group of people. It's carefully written but what makes **Hotel du Lac** interesting is the debt it owes to its lower generic equivalent, the pulp romance. The slow sorrow with life which finds temporary release in the strong-jawed hero is here displaced into a more upmarket world. Nothing, it seems, can really be moved or changed in the hothouse of traditional emotions. Thus perhaps the allure of the *image* of the terrorist. □

THEATRE

Starvation diet

Victoria Radin

The Party
TREVOR GRIFFITHS *The Other Place*
The Beckett Plays
Warehouse
Playboy of the Western World
J.M. SYNGE *Riverside*

TREVOR GRIFFITHS's **The Party** is set in 1968 but was written in 1972/73 and first produced in 1973. That was the year of Heath and the miners' strike and the three-day week and the British Rail go-slow. During rehearsals, as Clive Merrison, the WRP member who was understudying the role of the New Left spokesman Andrew Ford (or Robin Blackburn), documents in *Building the Party*, actors arrived late and rehearsed in mittens. One of them was Olivier: he had just been ousted as head of the National Theatre by Peter Hall and had elected to play John Tagg, the Gerry Healy figure in Griffiths's unswervingly parochial study of the British Left, instead of going out with Lear. Although he reportedly didn't understand a line of it, his Tagg is what people remember about the play, that and the wonder that it was commissioned by Ken Tynan for the bourgeois splendours of the Old Vic.

Today we trek off to see David Hare at the *NT* while *The Party* is revived at The Other Place in Stratford at the instigation of David Edgar, the Royal Shakespeare Company's new literary commissar, for an audience of actors, theatrical agents, dedicated theatre buffs and critics, some 200 or so a night, in repertory. No doubt they will lap it up: a combination of greed and complacency ensues whenever a hunk of intellectual meat is tossed into the wilfully veggie theatrical arena; and the resulting self-congratulation at actually having swallowed a morsel blinds one to the fact that it is of little nutritional value.

Griffiths's play is very much a small corner of Britain observed by one man. During the Sixties, Tony Garnett, producer of 'committed' pseudo-documentaries for the BBC, held political evenings in his Swiss Cottage pad in which figures like Gerry Healy, then General Secretary of the Socialist Labour League, to become the Workers' Revolutionary Party, crossed swords with such as Robin Blackburn of the LSE and the *New Left Review*. In *The Party*, Joe Shawcross, an extremely socially conscious, not to say self-conscious, BBC producer, Northern in origin, holds a meeting to which come Andrew Ford (the Blackburn figure) and Joe Tagg (Healy). Also present, as a perpetual house guest, is a drunken playwright with heart, Malcolm Sloman (or David Mercer): Sloman's agent, who is organising a new new Left magazine (Clive Goodwin and the *Black Dwarf*) and, more emblematically, a (female) LSE student, community agitprop theatre man, Shawcross's working-class younger brother and first wife. In Howard Davies's production, directed in collaboration with David Edgar, Lindy, the ex, purportedly a journalist on the *Guardian*, is played by Josette Simon, a very young black actress: casting more favourable to wish fulfilment than to social veracity.

This new production mercifully shears the play of its prologue, which involved a Groucho Marx figure doing a turn on Karl and the producer's 'abstracted fuck ballet' with his current wife. The come-on now is David Threlfall's producer miming and mugging Marcuse and Marx (both varieties) to a blatantly glassless mirror while clutching his pet guinea pig, who is called Novotny. Shawcross is meant to be the play's centre and the filter of its arguments, which are put across in two 15-20-minute speeches by Ford (Roger Allam), a smarmy Don Juan in an auburn wig who maintains that the Western proletariat has been assimilated by the bourgeoisie and that we must look to the Third World for revolution; and by Tagg (Ian McDiarmid being utterly convincing), who insists that the revolution will arise from a rigidly organised working class.

Both figures maintain — Ford embodies — the decadence of the British middle classes: 'The very fact of being tolerated tends to render us impotent,' says Ford. Having set out this argument, Griffiths takes it to its most banal level: Shawcross is still sexually impotent, an analysand and, in Threlfall's portrayal, a quavering, twitching loon heading so quickly for the bin that he nearly can't get it together to introduce his guests and does Griffiths's melodramatic line, 'I wanna say yes just once to something', as a shriek. How to believe in him as a kind of reactor to his guests' arguments, a man who, quite soundly, tells Tagg that the Party man's failing is that he has 'no way of being wrong'? As the iconoclastic drunk, Malcolm Storry has great vitality in a vitiated production and shows the role to be a kind of barometer of the other characters' humanity. The women's lines, rudimentary in scope, come over as some of the most banal heard on a stage: and too frequently I merely heard them, for the directors, puritanically eschewing all notion of sight lines in the benighted Other Place, kept the actors seated on a platformless stage. Ultimately Griffiths presents us with some arguments rarely heard on the stage, but puts them into the mouths of characters too foolish to allow us to take them seriously.

On loan from off-Broadway after the Edinburgh Festival, **The Beckett Plays** at the Warehouse offer a recentish trilogy of short, easily digested 'Dramaticules' gathered from hither and yon by the late Alan Schneider. *Catastrophe* and *What Where* have been taken to evince a belated political awareness in the old solipsist, but to my mind showed much more about the writer who plays games with the characters he conjures; the first piece, *Ohio Impromptu*, is a gentle poem on Sam's eternal themes of memory, loss and disaster which gives David Warrilow a chance to exercise his beautiful voice in unexpected phrasing.

While Lindsay Anderson's gruff **Playboy of the Western World** stars a snivelling Frank Grimes as the Irish wunderkind to Carolyn Pickles's rather sour Pegeen Mike; Nichola McAuliffe brings a needed touch of warmth as an unashamedly mammary Widow Quinn. □

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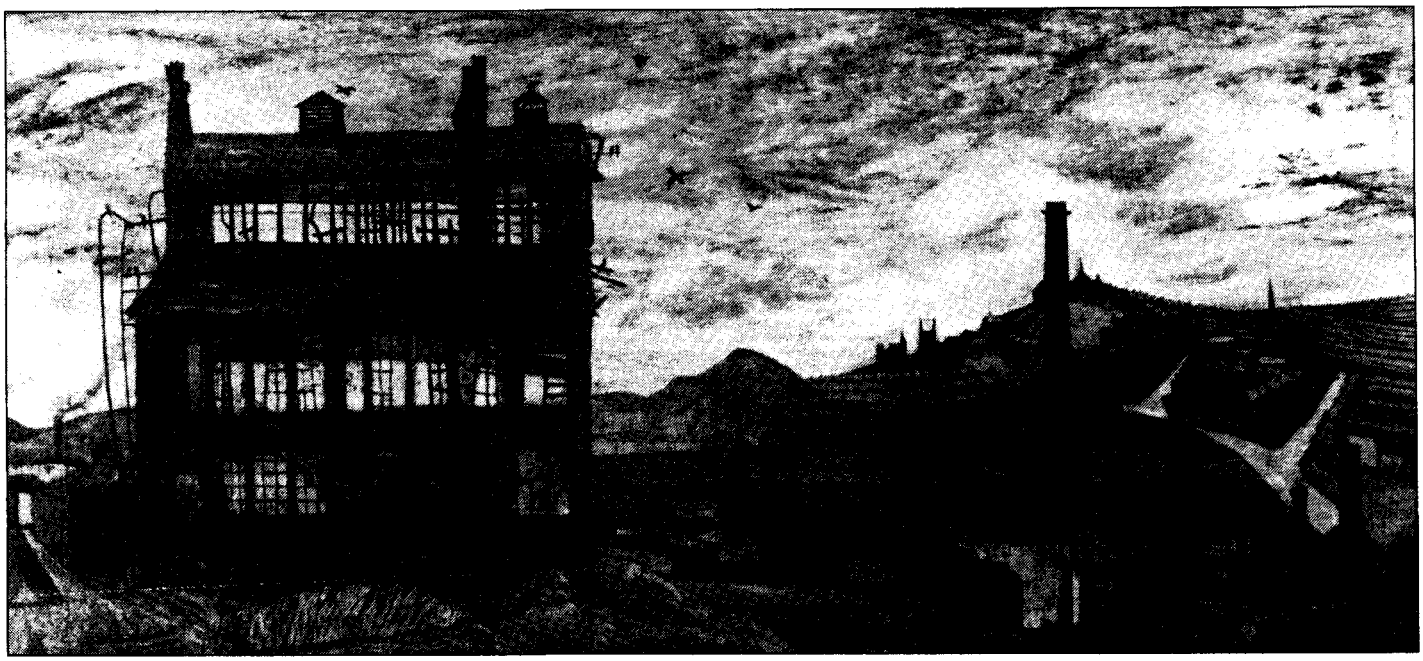

Derrick Greaves's 'Sheffield' setting the scene for the Forgotten Fifties exhibition

ART

Old scores

John Spurling

The Forgotten Fifties
Camden Arts Centre, until 23 September
Problems of Picturing
Serpentine

THE FORGOTTEN FIFTIES, which has arrived in London after spending the summer in Norwich and Coventry, started in Sheffield. Its originator, Julian Spalding, the director of the Sheffield Arts Department, calls it 'one of the most difficult exhibitions I have ever been involved in organising'. Perhaps his title was too provocative. Many of the artists chiefly associated with the Fifties were not so much overtaken by the new trends of the Sixties as pushed aside and rubbished. Their feelings must be similar to those of a government in exile after an overnight *coup d'état*. Add to that the fact that, even in their heyday, they were not at one, but divided and heated by the customary arguments and quarrels over art, life and society, and driven from power with all their factions still upon them, and you get some idea of the wasps' nest Julian Spalding disturbed.

His exhibition, in the circumstances, is a small triumph, for although the catalogue adumbrates the background and issues of the period, the show itself is purely visual, allowing the paintings, drawings and sculptures to speak for themselves without any attempt at didacticism. Since they do speak for themselves, quite sturdily and eloquently, the point implicit in the title is made: the period produced some good art which has been unjustly forgotten. On the other hand the limitations — of earnestness, drabness, traditionalism — are also obvious and the secret clause in Spalding's treaty with the past is that no one in their right mind, given the richness and variety of what has happened since, would want it back.

The scene is craftily set by the first painting you see as you enter the Camden Arts Centre: Derrick Greaves's *Sheffield*, a long urban landscape dominated by a ruined house in the left foreground and well sprinkled with industrial chimneys, the whole crustily painted in the characteristic livery of the Fifties, black, brown and cream. Greaves was one of the four 'Kitchen Sink School' painters, a boyhood friend of Jack Smith in Sheffield and a fellow-student at the Royal College of Art in London with Smith and Edward Middleditch. John Bratby was also at the Royal College and, with Greaves, Middleditch and Smith, represented Britain at the 1956 Venice Biennale. Finally, to complete the many cross-references contained in this opening glimpse of the show, Greaves's *Sheffield* was first exhibited at Helen Lessore's Beaux Arts Gallery, the commercial centre of Fifties realism, where the work of Auerbach, Bacon, Kossoff, Freud and Fussell appeared, as well as that of all four of the Kitchen Sinkers.

Bacon and Freud are not included in this exhibition, since Spalding does not see them as realists in the same sense as the others, but Auerbach and Kossoff are represented. They have somehow managed to retain their cachet through all the subsequent upheavals without much changing their formula, whereas poor Bratby — the best known of all in his day — has suffered the most thorough rejection. His paintings are somewhat cruder, brighter and more obviously popular in intention than Auerbach's and Kossoff's and it is easy to see why his home-and-kitchen portraits and still-lifes came to stand for that self-consciously mundane era and why the smoother, wittier, cooler Pop painters of the Sixties replaced him. Several artists, such as Anthonys Caro and Wishaw, Prunella Clough — with her industrial scenes in pale brown and cream — and John Hoyland — with grey hard-edged views of Sheffield — look perfectly at home in the Fifties, though they changed with the times to become leading abstractionists of the next two decades. Jack Smith changed too — and was expelled from the Beaux Arts Gallery for his effrontery — but alas he has never so far recaptured in abstraction the powerful grasp of form and space that made him the most immediately promising of the Kitchen Sink quartet.

Middleditch's work of the Fifties still stands up well: plain, wholesome and sensitive, as one would expect from his more recent, slightly more abstracted work, but also more ambitious. The two *Sheffield Weir* paintings, both in this exhibition, are distinctly grand — an adjective not usually associated with the Fifties. Peter de Francia's enormous *African Prison* — never exhibited before — is grand enough in scale, but oddly trivial in effect, its political passion diluted by melodrama and grotesquerie.

The outstanding artist of the period was the sculptor George Fullard, another Sheffield man and Royal College student, who shared a house in Bayswater with Greaves and Smith. Fullard's sculptures and drawings are as full of humour as they are unpredictable and authoritative and they look far less confined to the period than anything else here. He died in 1973 at the age of 50 and if there is one good reason for regretting the *coup d'état* of the Sixties it is that it seems to have left Fullard out in the cold.

According to the new biography of Kenneth Clark which I hope to review next week there is an ancient Persian belief that great art makes one feel 'young and strong and glad'. I emerged from **Problems of Picturing** at the Serpentine feeling old and weak and gloomy. The exhibition, consisting of work by five artists born in or around the Fifties, is for the most part arid, inhibited, ungiving, unnecessary. I except David Leapman, the youngest and least known, whose fey doodles on bare canvas suggest a mysteriously involuted personality of the David Jones stamp, but otherwise, if this is picturing, there's no problem. We can do without it. □

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EDINBURGH

Pulling punches

Angus Calder

ANDREW CLEMENTS in last week's *NS* described the Queen's Hall as a 'slightly remote' Festival venue. Well, from my (central) flat it's about seven minutes' walk and I've kept up my annual practice of hearing as many as possible of the 'Official' morning concerts in this intimate, even informal setting. This year, I've caught, among others, glowing Bach cello suites by **Yo Yo Ma** and wonderfully inward yet relaxed Mozart piano concertos from **Murray Perahia**. Also **Heinz Holliger**'s oboe in a strange programme ranging from Telemann to two short works by one Heinz Holliger. The latter did little to compensate for the shortage of contemporary music of which Andrew Clements very rightly complained, but three days later I enjoyed the **Koenig Ensemble**'s not-well-attended concert of unfamiliar works by Falla, Lambert, Poulenc and Richard Rodney Bennett.

Why on earth (I echo Clements) can't the Festival do more to sell such attractive 20th-century music? Frank Dunlop, in his final press conference, while jubilating deservedly over a good first year as Director, seemed to have accepted that particular criticism. I hope he also responds to voices clamouring for the return of **Beausoleil** (Official), a 'Cajun' folk-band from ancestrally-French Louisiana. Its leader, Michael Doucet, fiddled and sang like a man possessed. They needed a venue where people could dance.

But the big feather in Dunlop's cap has been the critically acclaimed reappearance of the Berliner Ensemble in Britain after nearly two decades. In the interim, British theatre has responded (often, alas, crudely) to Brecht's influence, while, judging from what I gathered at the Weimar Shakespeare Festival a couple of years ago, his Ensemble may have ceased to lead the East German avant-garde. It would have been more adventurous for Dunlop to have brought over that other Berlin company whose savage *Midsummer Night's Dream* set in the depths of winter was quicker-footed in its textual deconstruction than the Ensemble's new production of Goethe's Ur-**Faust**. This latter is magnificently staged and highly inventive in detail, but does not, on one viewing, seem to add up to more than the sum of its spectacular effects.

Brecht himself denounced as élitist 'the two thousandth transformation of some old hat, the spicing up of a venerable and now decomposing piece of meat'. I felt uncomfortable during the Ensemble's six-year-old **Galileo** because I feared that this was what we were getting: Brecht as cultural monument, *alias* corpse. My unease continued during their technically splendid recital of **Brecht Songs**, which had in raptures most of my friends who attended (and most of my friends did attend). In the *King's* Theatre, as an *Official* event, could this be Brecht?

What Brecht meant here around 1960 was the combination of unmistakeable political message with thoroughly entertaining presentation. Put three of this year's Fringe productions together, and you'd have something like it. Wild Man Theatre's **Poets to the People**, backed by the African National Congress, assembled slides, songs and well-spoken verse from South Africa in a way recalling Thirties mass-declamations. It was effective, but said nothing new. Hull Truck's **Up'n'Under**, by John Godber, related the saga of a very bad Rugby League team. Fast and extremely funny, it bore no 'social message', though as a coarse sportsman myself I felt that it projected the mixture of fantasy and defeatism in that underworld most exactly. Its climax, a 'big match' mimed on stage, challenged comparison with the Berliners themselves for deftness. And Ian Wooldridge's impressively conceived **Woyzeck** (Royal Lyceum) hammered home Büchner's critique of class society with pee and blood all over the stage.

Whereas *Galileo* was *refined*, the set and lighting were austerely *beautiful*. Ekkehard Schall's performance in the title part, supremely alienated and intense, was backed by superlative teamwork, and the play held an audience mostly without German rapt for three and a half hours. But where was the political punch? The Catholic hierarchy, representing obscurantist power, were neither guyed nor made terrifying. Next night, I caught the incomparable Dario Fo on the Fringe. His *Mistero Buffo* sketch about a Pope who meets Christ and quarrels with him, mimed solo, was as broad as a brothel-Madame's bottom, or as Billy Connolly going over the top, yet as sharp as a hoodlum's razor, or as the very best Brechtian satire. There — as when Schall was performing in the *Brecht Songs* event — one experienced the subversive union of protest and artistic dynamism. □

FILMS

With no holds barred

John Coleman

A cage within a cage in 'Güney's The Wall'

Güney's The Wall (18)
Phoenix; ICA
Unfaithfully Yours (15)
Studio; Classic, Tottenham Court Road; London release
The Hit (18)
Classic, Haymarket

UNUSUAL BUT perhaps not inapt to incorporate a director's name in the title of his latest film: if it seems a mite over-cautiously intent on steering innocents away from a re-run of that Pink Floyd-Alan Parker pop-up, it has the virtue of underlining the fact that Yilmaz Güney, a Turkish director of brave distinction, is at last free — in France — to do his own thing.

Hitherto, the precise parentage of 'Güney' movies had been up a tree, with the man himself in jail and such loyal collaborators as Serif Gören making — from clandestine scripts — the works that brought Güney an art-house and festival fame. *Yol*, signally, was something harsh and fresh, a packed stare at an alien, contemporary landscape through which prisoners — during an ironic week's leave — waded as through a mined marsh. It was powerfully chastening, bleak, saved maybe from unremitting gloom by that exoticism of travellers' perks (glimpses of foreign parts, customs, village rituals) which can lift even the most confirmed of politically anguished and exercised hearts. But that Turkey was a giant cage, no matter how far you travelled, it left little doubt.

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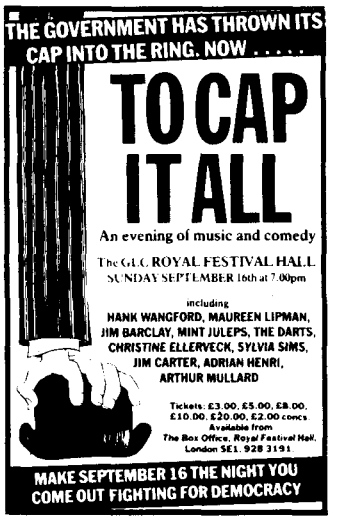
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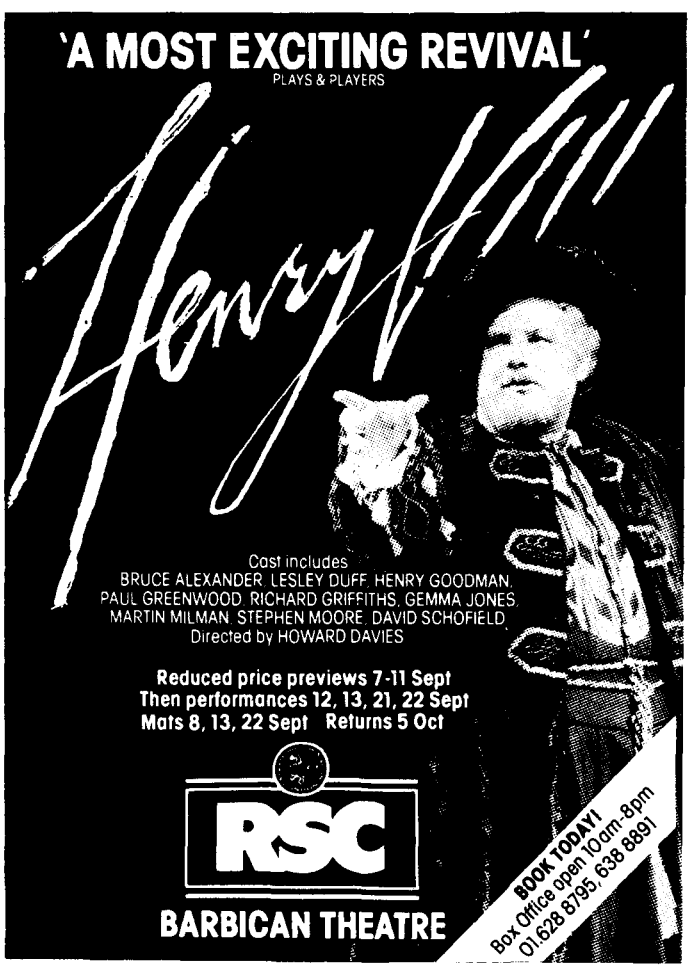
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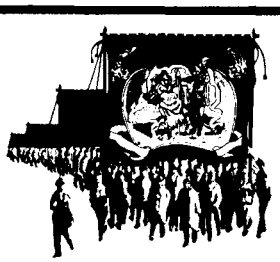

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Güney's The Wall reduces the mileage but hammers home the image. Based, according to its writer-director, on a children's revolt in a prison in Ankara in 1976, this remorseless affair shows — and Izzet Akay's camera has been encouraged to make rather a meal of it — a society behind bars. The place comes hideously alive, in a deathly way, harbouring not just kids but men, women, seen segregated most tellingly from above, when we are allowed to hover visually overhead, looking down on the walled courts that contain their outdoor moments. There is a sinisterly casual feel to things; the tannoy is as likely to bellow radio commercials for soap as officialdom's restrictions on visiting rules; kids buzz around their sleeping quarters with an eavesdropped aimlessness. But violence, of course, is worst when aimless and gradually a mad pattern emerges, with a VIP dropping in on the kitchen to praise the merits of lentils to hungry children (there is never enough food and only corrupt money can buy it), with a dormitory hierarchy of spivs establishing itself on the edges of our consciousness, with the truly dreadful sadism of a swarm of warders, little Hitlers acting with random viciousness and not above sexual use of their charges.

There is a failed riot, a lad is shot, others are shipped out to prisons that will evidently be worse than this one. The fists and cudgels slam in, ram home: and home is clearly where Mr Güney's heart is not, as why should it be? His art, though, is frequently in the right, exacting place. There is some running business of men thudding down an alley of nastily gnarled trees, always in a mist, chanting like GIs on an assault course, that hangs on in the head; there is a singular unpleasantness to do with a mock-marriage, bridal petals strewn, that Stroheim might have relished; there is a whole arsenal of fine effects. And there is, some time before the end of this extremely angry film, the sense of over-kill, of a labour of hate which has one faintly incredulous. Those robotic warders, for an instance, under all their marshalled beastliness, are surely intended as keystone elements in the occasion. But one doubts very much whether they were meant, however disloyally and fleetingly, to be thought of as Kops.

One of the two interesting queries aroused by Howard Zieff's **Unfaithfully Yours** is why the woman in the case, Miss Kinski, has recently taken to spelling her first name with a 'j': Nastassja. *Ja*? The other is why Mr Zieff decided to make this re-hash of a lesser Preston Sturges film unfortunately his. When Hollywood forgot how to make comedies, it wasn't merely that some ignorant banker threw away the mould, mistaking it for a dusty death-mask: he, or one of his minions, threw away the magic metronome by which past masters paced their stuff. Timing went out of the door as well: that extra Laurel-and-Hardy brick, chimney-dropped to the wincing, delighting second; Lubitsch's famously saucy doors ineffably shutting; even Mr Sturges having Rex Harrison shove his lank shanks through chairs in the ur-version of this latest vehicle for Dudley Moore. Mr Harrison had style. Mr Moore has luck. Otherwise how to account for his cuddly, women's clubs bankability? Cuddly can't be enough, can it?

Dud and Nastassja enjoy some humorous moments

To be scrupulously fair, this protracted anecdote of a world-acclaimed classical conductor (Dud) who mistakenly imagines his ravishing new wife Daniella (Nastass*ja*) is having it off with a tall violinist, or fiddler (Armand Assante), has its humorous moments. The conductor's three fantasies of wife-disposal are reduced to one and the differences between the imagined and the actual — making good use of such modernities as the banked TV monitors with which the concierge of an expensive apartment block whiles away his time — approach the rib-tickling, tentatively. They also affront the macabre, as I seem to recall the Sturges did a bit, using Halloween animal masks unsettlingly. But the tendency to slump into slapstick (why *do* directors feel the need to come on like Blake Edwards when misusing the real, untapped talents of Dudley Moore?) quite drowns some nice little pieces of dialogue and situation. And, in this connection, which has everything to do with fond reminiscences of the maverick Sturges — who wielded a stable of superb bit-players so that one was inclined to turn up simply for them — nothing is more saddening than seeing Zieff gesture or genuflect in that direction with a private-eye character never allowed his chances: that eye stays shut.

Stephen Frears's **The Hit** is a super-elegant event, enjoying its Spanish vistas, which finds Terence Stamp playing his all-knowing — but what does he know that's so special? — saint-hero role as a super-grass locked in some Pinteresque combat with a counter-cast John Hurt as the mute and muddled assassin finally despatched to his hide-out to dispose of him. When Stamp used John Lennon as an excuse to quote John Donne I knew whether to laugh or cry. Script by Peter Prince, apart from that. □

AUTUMN BOOKS

The special Autumn Books issue, with its selected list of forthcoming titles and reviews of books by Arthur Marshall, Georges Simenon, Igor Stravinsky and about Agatha Christie, Eleanor Duse, Strindberg, Reagan . . . and many others, will be published in two weeks' time on 21 September. Advertisement bookings for this issue can be accepted up to Friday noon, 14 September. All enquiries to Michael Roberts on 01-253 2001.

Andrew Lumsden

Carry on couriering

IF EVER you should feel in need of *fugue* — of that psychological release of flight which Agatha Christie once famously resorted to — try couriering. Not the couriering of the spy-world, of those hapless runners who criss-cross Europe fondly carrying what they suppose to be Secrets, but lapel-badge and clip-board couriering. 'Out' couriering, if I may put it like that.

I was *chef du tour* as the French call it (though not necessarily as they spell it, so awful is my French) for 15 days this summer. It was beginner's couriering. I had responsibility for 29 American high-school kids aged from 15 to 18, three of their teachers (re-styled 'counselors' for the purpose of foreign travel), the husband of one of the teachers, the mother of one of the kids and two endearing, brave women in their late sixties, one of whom had barely recovered from surgery on both her ankles.

A party of 36. Plus successive drivers, who were under my command. And myself, over whom I had as little control as usual. The Americans came from three schools in three States: none from the big city, all from the boonies. The 22 high-school girls and one teacher all wore braces on their teeth. Everyone except me and each driver had paid $1,500 or so for the charter flight to and from the States and a whirlwind by coach through London, Normandy, Mont St Michel, the Loire, Paris, Provence, the Cote d'Azur, lunch in Italy and a Swiss alp.

I got my chance to do it (and so, without any prior experience, will any reader next year if the dollar chances again to be strong and the tour-companies desperate for couriers) and was terrified before it began. Hotels, drivers, and so

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on, are pre-booked by the operator, but anything can and will go wrong, and it's for the courier to salvage emergencies, spew information, bridge language gaps and accept three or four hours sleep a night.

That I happen to know what Louis XIV said to the courtier who was *almost* late and what Henri IV said about Paris (tricky tenses both) would be no preparation, I feared, for phoning French cafés and saying we'd be 38 instead of 37 for dinner, two hours late, and wouldn't touch chicken and french fries. Indeed it wasn't. Never was there anything so humiliating as my conversations over the French phone system. Never did anyone lose so many coins in that system.

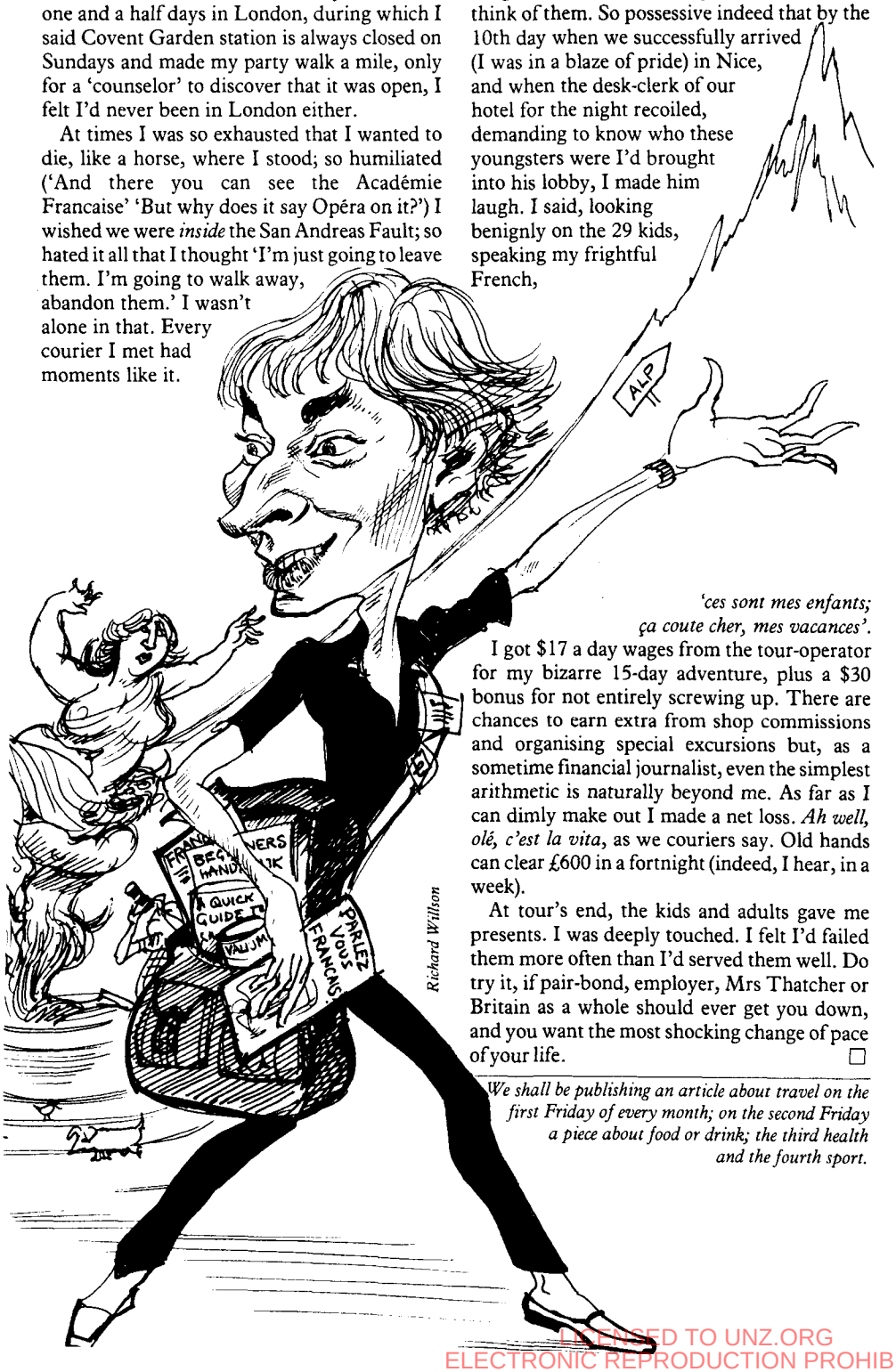
I'd never been to Normandy, Mont St Michel, Tours, Avignon, Arles, Monaco or Leysin in Switzerland, in advance of each of which — and while *in* which — I had to pretend that I knew them like the back of my hand. After one and a half days in London, during which I said Covent Garden station is always closed on Sundays and made my party walk a mile, only for a 'counselor' to discover that it was open, I felt I'd never been in London either.

At times I was so exhausted that I wanted to die, like a horse, where I stood; so humiliated ('And there you can see the Académie Francaise' 'But why does it say Opéra on it?') I wished we were *inside* the San Andreas Fault; so hated it all that I thought 'I'm just going to leave them. I'm going to walk away, abandon them.' I wasn't alone in that. Every courier I met had moments like it.

The best of it is the company of other couriers, at snatched meals together. There are fully as many women couriers as men, zestful and able. Equally zestful are the Belgian, French, Italian drivers. Women couriers, often students or graduates in their 20s, ought to bring a class suit in Strasbourg against Continental drivers claiming millions in damages for sexual menace. I was exposed, I'm sorry to say, to no indelicacies, even though the drivers are always male and might be advised to try widening their net a little.

Rebuffs, setbacks, physical prostrations, do though, in some magical way, evolve into an extraordinary sense of achievement as the days — each one time-dilated, as if on Mann's *Magic Mountain* — at last tick by. So much misery, as the actress said to the bishop after their night together, does at least take you out of yourself. It is a *fugue* from ordinary life.

I grew to be so fond of 'my' kids, as I began to think of them. So possessive indeed that by the 10th day when we successfully arrived (I was in a blaze of pride) in Nice, and when the desk-clerk of our hotel for the night recoiled, demanding to know who these youngsters were I'd brought into his lobby, I made him laugh. I said, looking benignly on the 29 kids, speaking my frightful French,



Richard Willson

'ces sont mes enfants; ça coute cher, mes vacances'.

I got $17 a day wages from the tour-operator for my bizarre 15-day adventure, plus a $30 bonus for not entirely screwing up. There are chances to earn extra from shop commissions and organising special excursions but, as a sometime financial journalist, even the simplest arithmetic is naturally beyond me. As far as I can dimly make out I made a net loss. *Ah well, olé, c'est la vita*, as we couriers say. Old hands can clear £600 in a fortnight (indeed, I hear, in a week).

At tour's end, the kids and adults gave me presents. I was deeply touched. I felt I'd failed them more often than I'd served them well. Do try it, if pair-bond, employer, Mrs Thatcher or Britain as a whole should ever get you down, and you want the most shocking change of pace of your life. □

We shall be publishing an article about travel on the first Friday of every month; on the second Friday a piece about food or drink; the third health and the fourth sport.

Naseem Khan

Carnival

IT makes top policemen cry out nervously in their sleep. It leaves black organisations deep in debt. And it fills the streets of West London with more than twice the numbers that attend the FA Cup Final. Notting Hill Carnival, 11 years old this year (in its present form), is both success and failure.

Its success is obvious on the streets of Notting Hill, with over a thousand musicians and costumed dancers. There were enough sights this year to shortcircuit the imagination of a Salvador Dali. Skull-faced demons cavorted around a brass band. An iridescent mermaid strode down Ladbroke Grove, her long tail cunningly borne along on the chassis of a baby-pram. On the corner, resting Pharaohs, their head-dresses at their feet, munched kebabs and pitta bread. And the sounds could have woken the dead (by the look of some of the weirder things on the road, they did). Lorry after lorry of steel bands, brass bands. At each corner a monumental sound system, maybe more than one, vying with each other for the power of their reggae/soca/calypso decibels. And the smells. Cooking smells and beer smells and the smell of warm dust on a late summer's day and a quarter of a million people down in the Grove to make carnival.

Success it certainly is — on the streets. On the streets it attracts all sorts of clichés: 'colourful', 'exotic', 'exuberant', even 'natural rhythm'. But go behind the scenes a few weeks before and a very different carnival emerges. And for my money, that is the more truly impressive one. It is neither glamorous nor exotic. In fact, if you go around the 'mas' or carnival camps as I did, you are more likely to meet people in the last stages of exhaustion, almost asleep on their feet as they sew away at their seventieth, eightieth, ninetieth costume. Surrounded by bales of cloth, they remind me of the miller's daughter shut up with a roomful of straw and told to spin it into gold. The Elimu Centre was not alone in getting through 500 or so yards of material for its mas theme (as well as 24 tubes of Uhu, nine drums of Evostick and countless sequins). Costume teams of over a hundred participants are not uncommon.

There were around 40 'mas' camps this year, and very surprising some of them were. Even the obvious camps or bases presented visual shocks. Turn into the club Perpetual Beauty's alleyway, and you'll find your way barred by a 20-foot high Queen's costume (each costume band has its elaborate King and Queen). A triumph as much of engineering as of dressmaking skill, it has huge wings as big as sand yachts and is half red/black and half blue/white since the theme Perpetual Beauty had chosen was Heaven and Hell. Suspended along the length of Elimu's ceiling hung a huge

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glittering fish, a centrepiece costume for their theme, *'Toute Baggaie La Mer'*.

And yet there were other places that were even more startling. Walk down the steps to Mrs Learmond's little council basement and you would have found yourself in the camp of the Starlite Mas Association. The front room is barely accessible, chock-a-block with rails of costumes. Even the tiny garden has been taken over. The King's and Queen's costumes rest here, covered by polythene. Meanwhile, the kitchen is just a happy memory. Divided in two by a makeshift curtain, it provides space for two older West Indian women, blearily and doggedly whirring away at their machines. No one has cooked a meal here for weeks.

Mrs Fevier's West Hampstead flat is even more like an Aladdin's cave. The Flamingo Carnival Camp have chosen to play sea-creatures and this is their camp. Open the door whose china plaque neatly promises 'Loo', and you're in wonderland. There and in the garage wait immense blushing oyster shells, papier maché crabs, big scarlet lobster costume and hats galore for the jellyfish that make up one section of the 'footsoldiers'. They are quite stunning, and so are many more — Genesis's sumptuous Land of the Pharoahs, based closely by Vernon Williams on research in the British Museum, for instance. Most imaginative of all, in my opinion, was Twelfth Century carnival club's theme. Their brilliant designer, Ashton Charles, had based their 75 costumes on the work of the designer Erté. The result was magnificently stylish: conceived with imagination and executed with skill. Quiet-spoken Charles is a men's tailor. Work on carnival, he said simply, keeps him going for the rest of the year.

MOST OF the preparation is done on spec, on credit and through sheer stubborn persistence. Flamingo, a newer group, got a mere £250 from a hard-pressed Arts Council. Their beautiful marine life will by now have put the club over £1,300 in debt. Other secretaries and committees, too, for all their own fund-raising, have resignedly faced red bank balances. The music bands fared little better. London-based bands on the three carnival sites got only £50 apiece.

Although public funding is now higher than it was, it still bears absolutely no relation to the scale and popularity of this extraordinary event. Its potential, say its organisers, for a greater degree of self-financing is high. But to develop that, they need a permanent structure. Funding for their administrator, Pepe Francis, runs out at the end of the coming month.

Isn't it about time that someone took carnival seriously?

As festivities end, the gorgeous costumes are for the most part broken up and dismantled; the seamstresses and the wirebenders go home to sleep.

This is the carnival of anonymous people, a cottage industry that spills out of homes and clubs and back rooms. It belies totally the notion that only arts professionals can produce work that is worth consideration. Isn't it time that the unnamed hundreds, creators of this unique occasion — the largest street festival in Britain — were given the respect that is their due? □

TELEVISION

Mary Harron

Rites

A Wedding In The Potteries (BBC-2) featured a final credit that read 'Anthropologist — Liz Hart'. Was this irony? If it was serious how did the factory workers at Royal Doulton like having an anthropologist investigate their quaint tribal rites? Judging by the publicity one expected all kinds of bizarre, loam-covered primitive customs — blood sacrifice at the very least. It turned out to be a quiet, touching fly-on-the-wall documentary and less patronising than the credits suggest; and, far from being an anthropological investigation, it didn't even tell us the origin of the one odd ritual on offer.

The bride-to-be, Christine, is a 'free-hand painter' in the Character Jug Shop of a pottery works. In the pre-wedding ritual, her workmates dressed her up as Little Miss Muffet and led her, blushing and giggling, round the work place and then tied her to a post outside for two hours, perhaps as a symbolic comment on marriage. It seemed an odd but harmless rite of passage, serving to emphasise the specialness of the occasion and the element of fear and mystery in all weddings.

That night, in a more modern ritual, Christine and her mother danced in each others' arms in a hen party at a disco. 'I wish I could have my Mum here all the time,' admitted Christine, plump and innocent as a new-hatched chick, as she sat on the settee in her new home. 'I'll be your supervisor now,' laughed her fiancé Mick, a touch ominously. The National Coal Board, who brought Christine's family to the area, now offer unemployment. Mick is gambling on an uncertain future as a salesman; Christine's passage into adult life could be grim.

Some bright young media studies graduate should write a thesis on 'The Compression of Narrative in the American Mini Series', with special reference to Sidney Sheldon's **Master of the Game** (BBC-1). This is what blurb writers would call 'panoramic': a saga of love, hate, revenge, greed and some exceedingly odd dress designs, spread over three continents and three generations. It is shamelessly gripping and more than action packed: I went to the kitchen for a moment and missed the Second World War.

In this narrative shorthand, events are suggested, motivations are ignored (characters, like the plot, follow a cartoon strip format) and the audience is left to make up the gaps: all for the sake of a violent, nail-biting pace. This almost helps to disguise the odd fluctuations in age: Dyan Cannon, as wicked matriarch Kate Blackwell, begins as a wizened 16 and then seems to crystallise at a somewhat ravaged 35 as other characters grow white haired around her. Her son Tony (Harry Hamlin) reaches about 30 and then seems to get younger again. But who has time to think about it? In episode two Tony met his former mistress and discovered his mother had ruined his career as a painter, rushed home to find his wife was dying in childbirth, became the father of twins and a widower, realised his mother had a hand in his wife's death and shot her — and that was only the last four minutes.

Newsnight (BBC-2) deserves more critical attention than it gets. Of course it's a platform for dreary Official Statements, but, if the presenters' dry, quizzical approach satisfies the BBC's notions of balance, the film items often subvert it. Last week Julian O'Halloran did a fine investigation into the hospital cleaners' strike in Barking. Thanks to privatisation, the resident cleaning firm drastically cut wages and cleaning hours in order to offer a competitive price for their services. The result: a dirty hospital, overworked nurses and a picket line. There was a glorious sequence of Mrs Thatcher sweeping through a hospital visit. She posed gingerly by the bedside of a small child (the sheets probably weren't clean), gave a radiant, compassionate smile as the news cameras flashed and then said briskly, 'You should get one or two nice ones out of that'. Of course at the end the voice-over said well the striking cleaners might be right or the government might be right — but the real verdict had already been made.

Inquiry: The Great British Housing Disaster (BBC-2) was produced, ironically enough, by my landlord Adam Curtis. This was an investigation into the Sixties building boom, in particular the assembly-line mode of 'systems building' in which concrete panels were bolted together like a house of cards, to create the high rise New Jerusalem. Housing is a most undramatic subject for a documentary, because buildings don't move. But these do: the interviews were conducted against a background of rotting concrete panels falling from great heights, and the swing of the wreckers' ball. T. Dan Smith emerged, red and mottled, to say he spent three years in prison in as good conditions as those tenants; pity the two and a half million who still live in them. □

Weekend competition

No 2838 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

Could we have extracts from documents which, had they been leaked at the time, might have shed a different light on the Fire of London, the Battle of Agincourt, the Black Hole of Calcutta, etc? Max. 150 words by Wednesday (sic) 19 September.

No 2835 **Set by E. O. Parrott**

Crossword clues to the names of well known figures.

Report **By Glancing Tom**

Ah, that's better; that's just what a person needed: a tasty little office job to tide him over the winter. See what comes of doing people a favour? Own desk; own telephone; own teaspoon, teacup and saucer; own supply of

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beluga caviar and limes. . . Anyone want the loan of a ladder and bucket? But back to the job — and I have to say I'm very, very impressed. Not just at how twisted your minds are, but at the breadth of your interests. Neil Kinnock *and* Arthur Negus? Danny la Rue *and* Ronald Biggs? There was one clue, from Sally Evans, which did have me totally stymied, but see what the rest of you think — it went (I quote): 'Unpopular woman prime minister (8,8).' The answers to the other clues appear at the bottom of the page. Each gets its setter three quid.

1. No dealer confused jury decides (2,6)
2. In a B-Feature a gangster may lead a people! (6)

GERARD BENSON

3. Interviewer has nothing more than a tie and a beam all round (5,3)
4. Political leader muddled back after scrap in the sub-continent (6,6)

NOEL PETTY

5. Heartless tit masked by devious brain (7)

T. J. MOOREY

6. The French write leads the French Right. Right? (2,3)

ROLPH LEIGHTEN

7. Explain the secret malady within he keeps demanding (3,7)

C. I. SEMEONOFF

8. The poor Red is rich who's changed into an American citizen (20, 2 words — this contestant insisted on using AZED's conventions for multiword clues)

R. A. BAILEY

9. Unfortunately that great charmer is not for turning (8,8)

BOB JENKINS

10. French postman or Egyptian storyteller from the US? (6,6)

BASIL RANSOME-DAVIES

11. Our next poet laureate? You must be jokin' (6)

GILLIAN LOVATT

12. With no Medusa cheese and a musical Billy, you can make a Trip-le-Decker (4,4)

A.G.D. STANFORD

13. Neither of India nor Washington Square this author of interminable odes (5,5)
14. Sounds like an honest place of worship for ultra-right sparks' man (5,7)

NICHOLAS MURRAY

15. His cue for action? Booze before ten, with no end to high spirits (4,7)

B. LOVECHILD

16. Sounds like a nut; add a fig mixture. (7,7)
17. Top brass present, we hear (7,3)

PETER NORMAN

18. He wears dress with russet edging, has optimum health and enjoys his own reflection (6,7)

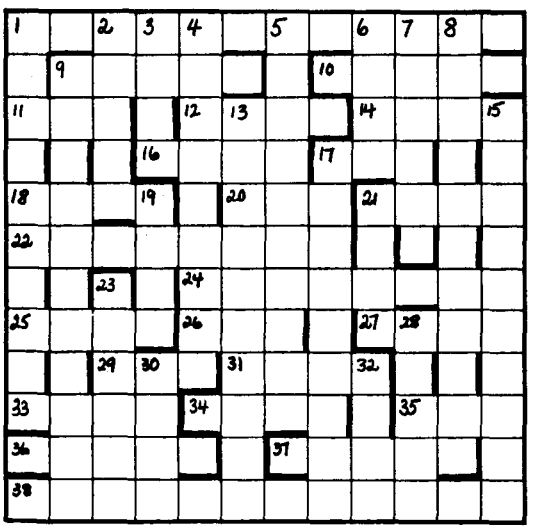
JACKY PEACOCK

Ans: *1) De Loreans; 2) Reagans; 3) Robin Day; 4) Indira Gandhi; 5) Britain; 6) Le Pens; 7) Tom Dalyell; 8) Christopher Isherwood; 9) Margaret Thatchers; 10) Norman Mailers; 11) Larkins; 12) Zola Budds; 13) Clive James; 14) Frank Chapples; 15) Alex Higgins; 16) Colonel Gaddafis; 17) General Zias; 18) Robert Maxwell.*

Salamanca 85

'Trevises'

PRIZES: £25 cheques for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 85, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 2 October.



The unclued answers form a group of eight (in Brewer). Other answers (excepting two place names) are in Chambers.

Name _____

Address _____

_____

_____

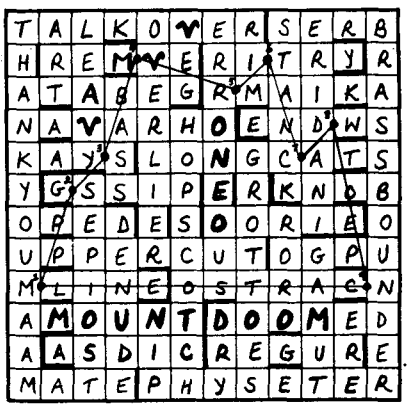
ACROSS

1 These are *sweet* plants? (12)
9 In manure mostly yellow you'll find these fungi (5)
11 One among Caledonians? (3)
12 A glass as drained out — what are left? (4)
14 Count to 45 inches once? (4)
16 Wander (away from street?) (4)
17 Get attention of the arena? (3)
20 Having reputation no longer (it being mostly brought to ruin?) (3)
21 Drunk rarely getting well when among those who don't touch a drop, having turned (4)
22 One with following among trees as convert to hunting-ground (8)
24 One with a following (right person, taking no notice of laws etc.) (8)
25 That is the content see, when getting ultimately cold? (4)
26 What we'd rather have when father gets cross? (3)
27 Part of Japan (*not* Shikoku region?) (4)
29 See, this could be hard part of scale (3)
31 Which proves one to be an idiot savant? (4)
33 Knot found about main part of a tree (not the extremes), right? (4)
34 I, a princess? Not Pisces? Perhaps (4)
35 Language giving name to old game (3)
37 Do describe reverse of one in community (5)

DOWN

2 One you'll find in most productive surround, Northern? (5)
3 Trace fish in reef (4)
4 This document's a round record-book with very hard cover (standard content having been raised?) (9)
5 Who speaks English? A long sort of native holding a cross (10)
6 Like the safest cigarettes? There's no end to them, so take pot! (4)
7 Over man, one King that's fey? (6)
9 Sure auto firm can use this desperately, or is gone! (11)
17 Cutting down trees wastefully, whistling (9)
23 US city, older one in a state (3,3)
28 You reportedly lean on these bones? (5)
30 A tree once backward, with no centre (4)
32 Leads in East (mainly independant regions) (4)

Solution to Salamanca 84

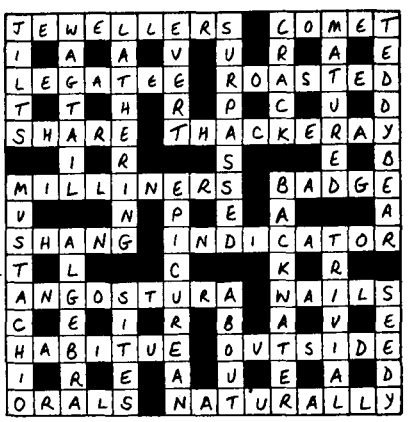


(features of the solution are highlighted by bold lettering) 9 0's are omitted. The puzzle and its solution are based upon Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* and the grid displays the One Ring inside the crater of Mount Doom.

Prizewinners to Salamanca 84

T. H. East (Pinner, Middx)
Roy Palmer (Broadbottom)
M. Taylor (Saltcoats)

Solution to 1451



Prizewinners to 1451

F. Henderson (Gloucester)
R. Jenkins (Bradford)
Nick Midgley (London N16)

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LISTINGS

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LONDON 'Socialism and Justice' Radical Philosophy/Socialist Society Dayschool 11-5.30pm County Hall, SE1. Registration: £1/50p unwaged. **Details: Peter Osborne, 167 Amhurst Rd, E.8. 01-254 8099.**

TUES 11 SEPT

LONDON 'Education, the Rates & Public Services: Abolition of the GLC, ILEA & Rate-capping'. Public Meeting 5pm. **Details & Venue: 254 7263.**

LONDON 'One more push for Freedom' march on anniversary of military coup in Chile 1973. 1pm Rally Portland Place, W1 march to Red Lion Square, rally 2.30pm. **Org. Chile Solidarity Campaign 272 4298.**

WED 12 SEPT

LONDON Namibia in Struggle — a festival of Culture & Resistance. 7.30pm Commonwealth Inst, Kensington High St, W8. (until 15th). **Tickets £3/£1.50 unwaged 01-937 2367.**

LONDON 'Land Values: Implications for the Health Service' Spkr. Frank Dobson, MP Shadow Health Minister. 8pm GLC, County Hall, SE1. **Details: Labour Land Campaign, 01-267 2245 (eves.)**

TOOTING BEC Free showing of 'The War Game' 8pm St. Lennards Church Hall, (just off Streatham High Rd.) Discn will follow. Wheelchair Access. **Org. Streatham CND.**

FRI 14 SEPT

LONDON Miners Benefit Night 8pm Camden Centre, Bidborough St, WC1. 'African Connection', Bario Latino, Seething Wells etc. NUM spkr. £2.50/£1.50 cons. **Org. Camden Miners Support Grp, 102 St Pancras Way, NW1.**

LONDON Ken Livingstone's Campaign Party 7-11pm Porchester Hall, Queensway, W2. Billy Bragg, Julian Bahula's Band, Holloway Al Stars, Disco, Bar. Adm. £2.50/£1.50 unwaged. **Org. Paddington Labour Party 01-286 9692.**

LONDON Gay Humanist Group AGM 7.30pm Library, Conway Hall Humanist Centre, Red Lion Square, WC1.

LONDON 'Supporting the Miners' Public Meeting called by Brent Miners' Support Campaign. Spkrs incl Ken Livingstone, Betty Heathfield, Jack Collins, Ron Todd. 7.30pm Aylestone School, Aylestone Ave, NW6. **Details: Richard Lynch 01-251 5493 (day) 01-459 8478 (eves).**

SAT 15 SEPT

LONDON Alternative Talking Newspaper Collective AGM: 'Alternative Strategies to accessing information. 2-6pm Handen Community Centre, Ossulston St, NW1. **Details: 01-318 2002/249 1251.**

ISLINGTON 'Can't Play! Won't Play!' week Exhibition on Civil Defence at Archway Library, West Library, Bridgeman Rd, Finance Dept, New Municipal Bldg, 220 Upper St, Central Library, 2 Fieldway Cres.

LEEDS 'Women's Rights to Jobs & Services' — National Planning Day for Women. 11.30am-4.30pm Leeds Civic Centre, Portland Street. **Details: Local Government Campaign Unit 01-387 9893.**

BIRMINGHAM 'Labour's Non-Nuclear Defence Policy' one day discussion conf for all Labour party membs. £4 per delegate/£1 unwaged. Creche. **Apply: LDLC, C/O Labour Co-ordinating Cttee, 9 Poland St, London, W1V 3DG. 01-439 3749.**

LONDON Gay Humanist Group Gathering to celebrate 5th Anniversary. 7.30pm Library, Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1.

SOUTHAMPTON Women's Health Fair. Voluntary/Statutory groups, info. on women's health plus workshops, exhibition, demonstrations, theatre grps, food, play area, bookstall. Adm. free. **Details: Ronie Foley, Southampton Women & Health Grp. 29 Dover St, Southampton, SO20GG. Phone: 31199.**

LONDON 'Pedal against Pit Closures' sponsored bike ride from County Hall 8am to Aylesham, Kent (65 miles). **Details: Melvin Benn, 19 Auckland Rd, SW11. 01-288 9154 for registration/sponsorship forms before 8 Sept.**

SUN 16 SEPT

LONDON 'To cap it All' — a concert for Local Democracy. 7pm Royal Festival Hall, SE1. Hank Wangford, the Darts, Mint Juleps, etc. Tickets £8, £5, £3/£2 unwaged. **Details: Local Government Campaign Unit 01-387 9893.**

LONDON Concert for Chile 7pm Irish Centre, Camden Sq, NW1. Tickets £2.50/£1.50 unwaged from CSC 272 4298 or Camden Labour Centre, 8 Camden Rd 267 1676. **Org. Chile Solidarity Campaign, 129 Seven Sisters Rd, N7.**

FORTHCOMING

18 SEPT LONDON Joint GAS/SSS meeting 'The Statistical Systems of the Metropolitan Boroughs' Spkr. John S. Chapman Head of Intelligence Unit GLC. 4.30pm Manson Theatre LSHTM Visitors welcome. **Details from: Denise Lievesley, SCPR, 35 Northampton Sq, EC1V 0AX 01-250 1866.**

18 SEPT CARSHALTON 'First Steps to Nuclear Disarmanent' Spkr Bruce Kent 8pm Carshalton Public Hall.

19-21 SEPT YORK 'Africa since Independence' Conf at York University. Panels on politics, media, health, education etc. Cost £55 membs/£65 non membs. **Booking forms, details from UK/Royal African Soc, 18 Northumberland Ave, London, WC2N 5BJ 01-930 1662.**

19 SEPT LONDON Report back meeting of Labour Movement delegation to Chile 7pm Friends' House, Euston Rd, NW1. **Org. Chile Solidarity Campaign 272 4298.**

19 SEPT ISLINGTON Nuclear Winter & Civil Defence Video shows. Cttee Rm 1, Islington Town Hall, Upper St, N1. 12.15-1.15, 6-8.30pm. Bunker Tours 12.15-5.30pm Info. Desk, Town Hall.

21-23 SEPT WHITBY 'Socialism and the Media in 1984' Whitby Labour Party 4th Weekend School. Spkrs incl David Douglass Yorks NUM Exec, Roland Boyes MP. Workshops & Socials. **Details: Susan Griffiths, 23 Anchorage Way, Whitby, N. Yorkshire. 0947 605849.**

21-23 SEPT LONDON Women & Unemployment Conf. at University of London Students' Union, Malet St, WC1. Women only, many workshops, theatre, films, creche, wheelchair access. **Details/application forms: Heather Tipton 01-572 3764.**

22 SEPT LONDON Celebration of Wholistic Living incl. T'ai Chi, Art Therapy etc. 2-6pm Mary Ward Centre, 42 Queen Sq, WC1. Creche. Adm. Free. **Details: 01-831 7711.**

22 SEPT LONDON NHS Festival 11am-5.30pm Jubilee Gdns, County Hall, SE1.

22-23 SEPT LONDON 'The Future of the Public Sector' 5th Annual Conf Socialist Economic Review. Adm £5.50/£2.50 unwaged. **Details: SERA 32 Radnor Rd, Bristol BS7.**

22-23 SEPT LONDON Children Planning & Play Conf. A new initiative to gather experimental, innovative projects and practitioners. Architects, planners, landscape architects, artists, designers, educationalists, play-workers, community/tenants assocs. will collaborate on ideas for urban play-spaces and strategies for future projects. Send s.a.e. to **Jane Riches, 17a Tufnell Park Road, N7 0PG.**

23 SEPT LONDON 'Songs for Freedom' Philippines Support Concert. 7.10pm Camden Center, Bidborough St, NW1. Tickets £3/£1.50 unwaged. Bar, Filipino food. **Details: 01-221 6601/603 1813.**

24 SEPT LONDON Benefit for CND by Musicians against Nuclear Arms. 7.30pm St Martins in the Fields, Trafalgar Sq. Mana Chamber Orchestra conducted by Sir Charles Groves. Tickets £2.50/£1.50 unwaged at door.

Sorry, but we can't accept entries over the phone. Entries must be received by Friday preceding issue date. We reserve the right to exclude items without giving reasons and are not responsible for errors. Space is strictly limited so if you definitely want your item to appear, we suggest you book it as an ad under the appropriate classified heading. See main heading for rates, etc.

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MEETINGS

THEOSOPHY: S.a.e. for free pamphlets, book list, programme. Informal Question/Answer Meeting, 'The Bhagavad-Gita as Yoga'. Sun. 9 Sept 8 p.m. ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2 3AL.

MONDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 7 P.M.

Africa Centre, 38 King Street, London

'Multinationals and International Solidarity'

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David Ward, Campaigns Officer, World Development Movement

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AMERICAN PROFESSOR of Biochemistry at Caribbean Medical School age 50, seeks a female companion under 35 for himself and his 6 yr old son. A graduate in Arts or Sciences would be an asset, since the companion could be sponsored to study medicine, and marriage would be considered if suited. An interest in the arts, theatre, music etc. is welcome. Please enclose photo. Box 9142.

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DIVORCED, 49, solvent, caring, sensitive, intelligent female, seeks similar qualities in a gentleman. Who can help to brighten Autumn's colours for me? Box 9149.

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FEMALE, ANY age, share retirement. Jogging, non-smoking, separated male graduate, active research, interests: phil./psy./biology. Farmhouse home; room children, help rearing if desired. Box 9161.

GAY MAN, 30, quiet graduate, 5' 7", slim, non-smoker, seeks intelligent companion, similar age. Interests: Labour/green politics, cycling, arts, travel. N. Wiltshire/anywhere. Box 9168.

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